



# THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year.

No. 6.

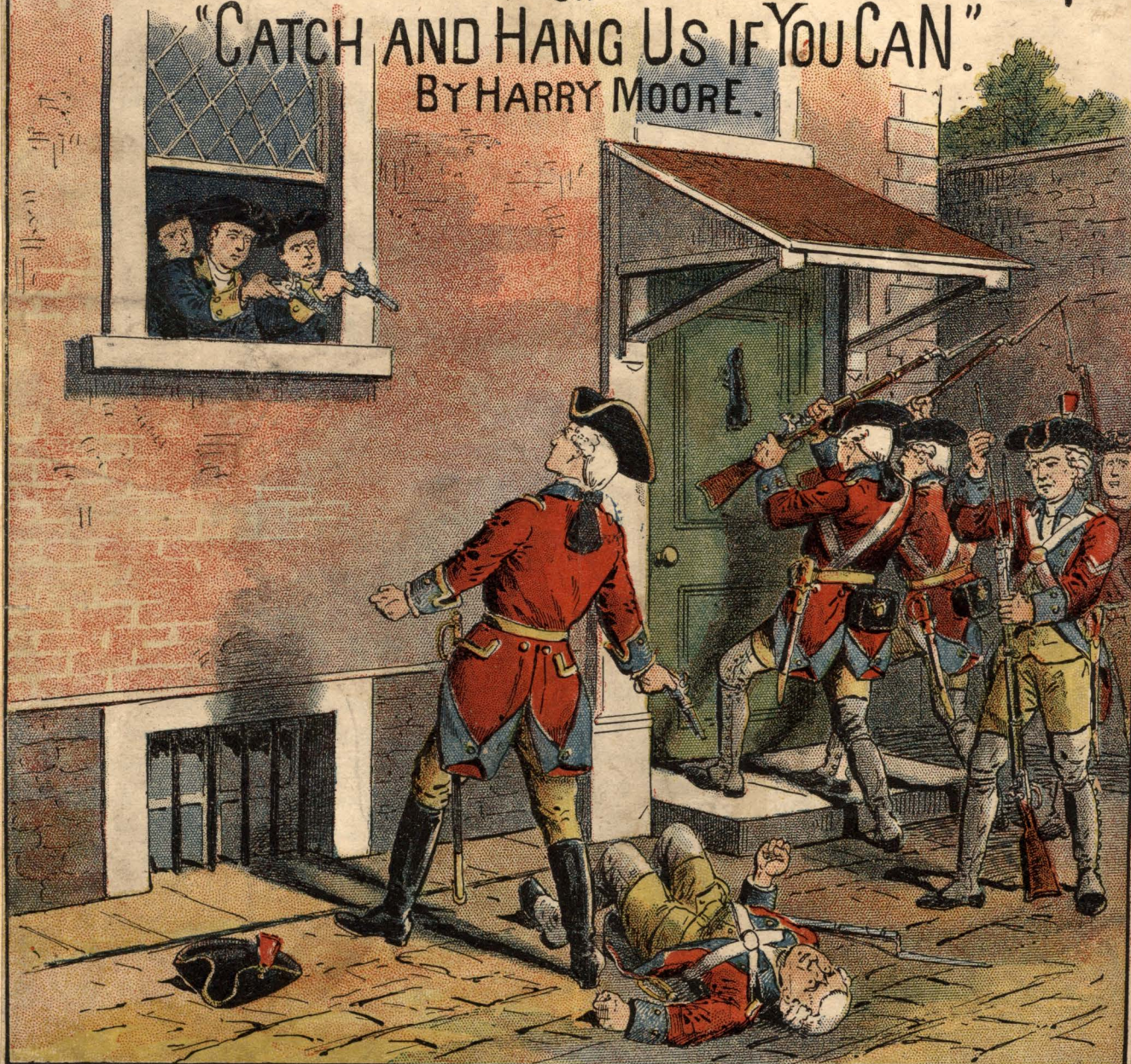
NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 8, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE LIBERTY BOYS' DEFIANCE; OR

### "CATCH AND HANG US IF YOU CAN."

BY HARRY MOORE.



As the Britons were making desperate efforts to batter down the door, the window was suddenly raised and they were confronted by two drawn pistols held in the hands of two determined Liberty Boys.



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## The Liberty Boys' Defiance

OR,

### "Catch and Hang Us If You Can."

BY HARRY MOORE.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### A DARK DAY FOR LIBERTY'S CAUSE.

The morning of November 17, 1776.

In the private room of General Greene in the farmhouse which was his headquarters, at Fort Lee, N. J., sat General Greene and General Washington, the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army.

The two generals looked most unhappy.

It was a dark day for the Cause of Liberty.

The Cause had just received what by many was considered a death-blow.

Only the day before the British had assaulted Fort Washington, on the opposite side of the river, and had captured the entire garrison, with the exception of one company of youths known as "The Liberty Boys."

The number of men captured was three thousand, and they were the best troops of the Continental Army.

The two generals had passed a bad night, talking the situation over, and trying to devise some way of offsetting the blow struck by the British.

They had been unable to think of anything that promised much.

At last, late at night—or, more properly speaking, early in the morning—they had thrown themselves down and watched a few minutes' sleep.

But they had not rested.

After breakfast, however, they had freshened up a bit.

And now, as I have said, they sat pondering over the situation.

Of the two, General Greene was perhaps the more downcast.

He laid the fault of the terrible disaster entirely at his own door.

He had received an order from General Washington some time before instructing him to evacuate Fort Washington, and make preparations to evacuate Fort Lee.

Just before receiving this order from the commander-in-chief he had received an order from the Continental Congress ordering him to give up Fort Washington only when forced to do so by the direst necessity.

This placed the general in a dilemma.

He did not know what to do.

Should he obey the order of the commander-in-chief?

Or should he obey the order of the Continental Congress?

He pondered the question long and earnestly, and at last came to a decision.

He decided to obey Congress.

The Congress had made General Washington commander-in-chief.



Then it was greater than General Washington, Greene reasoned.

Consequently when it came to a question of which to obey, he thought it only right he should obey Congress.

And here was where he had made his mistake.

He realized this very keenly now.

General Washington was on the ground, and knew what was going on.

He knew where the British were, knew their strength, and his keen insight into military tactics and strategy enabled him to foretell what the actions of the British would probably be.

He had foreseen that Fort Washington would fall, unless voluntarily given up.

Fort Lee the same.

So he had sent orders to Greene to that effect.

But, as we have seen, General Greene obeyed, instead, the orders of Congress.

He had reinforced the garrison of Fort Washington, with the thought that he would be able to hold it.

On the day before this morning on which we introduce the generals to the reader, the British, to the number of fifteen thousand, had appeared before Fort Washington, had attacked the fort, and after a sharp conflict, in which five hundred of the British were killed, as against only one hundred and fifty of the Americans, Colonel Magaw surrendered, to save the men from being massacred, the British having entered the fort in overwhelming numbers.

General Greene could not get over blaming himself for the disaster, and kept recurring to the subject, but General Washington, who did not blame Greene, told his friend to say no more.

"It was an error of judgment, General Greene," he said, kindly; "but it was entirely excusable. Who would not have done as you did, under the circumstances? Say no more, my friend."

After a silence of ten minutes duration, during which time General Washington was pondering deeply, he looked up and said:

"Well, one thing is certain: I must send word to General Lee, at North Castle, to bring his portion of the army over here immediately. If the enemy should cross the river and attack us, we would be in no condition to offer successful battle, with less than five thousand men available."

"True," coincided Greene; "Lee must bring his men over at once."

"I will send a messenger to Lee at once," said Washington.

"It will be a dangerous trip to make," said Greene.

"Yes, but I know who will make it in safety, if any one can."

Then the commander-in-chief called his orderly.

"Orderly," he said, "find a youth named Dick Slater, at once, and send him to us here."

"Yes, your excellency," and, saluting, the orderly withdrew.

Twenty minutes passed, and then the orderly returned.

He was accompanied by a handsome youth of about eighteen years.

"Dick Slater, your excellency," announced the orderly, and withdrew.

"Ah, Dick! good-morning," said General Washington, extending his hand, which Dick grasped.

General Greene shook hands with Dick.

"Be seated," said the commander-in-chief.

Dick took a seat and looked at the general inquiringly.

"Dick," said the great man, earnestly, "we have just met with a terrible misfortune in the loss of three thousand of our best troops. This leaves us short of men here, and it is desirable—nay, imperative—that the seven thousand troops at North Castle come across the river and join us at the earliest possible moment. I wish to send a messenger to General Lee with the order; I know of no one whom I think more capable of making the trip quickly and safely than yourself. Will you attempt the dangerous errand?"

"I will, your excellency!" said Dick promptly, his fine face lighting up. "I consider it an honor to be chosen for the task."

"I thought as much. Well, go and make your arrangements to make the trip at once. As soon as you are ready to return, and I will have the order to General Lee written."

"Very well, sir; I will only have to see about getting a horse."

Dick saluted and withdrew.

"Now, if I only had my splendid horse Major!" murmured Dick, "I would enjoy the prospect of making the trip to North Castle. Poor Major! I suppose he has again fallen into the hands of the British, from whom I captured him."

As Dick emerged from the house his attention was attracted to a group of soldiers who were looking across the Hudson toward Fort Washington, which had the day before been captured by the British.

The river at this point was about a mile wide, but it did not look to be so wide. Objects were plainly to be seen on the other side.

Dick looked to see what was attracting the attention of the soldiers, and soon made out what it was.

Some soldiers, whose red coats were easily distinguished



were evidently trying to catch a horse, which was running free, on the slope leading down from the fort to the water's edge.

A dozen redcoats were engaged in the chase of the horse.

They were having a lively time of it, too.

The horse evidently was enjoying his freedom, and did not like the idea of giving it up.

"That horse is a patriot," said one of the soldiers who was watching the scene with interest; "he believes in having his freedom."

"He doesn't like British rule, that is evident!" laughed Bob Estabrook, a youth of about Dick's age, and he turned to Dick as the latter approached.

"Hello, Dick! Where have you been?" he asked.

"To see General Washington," was the reply.

"Something on the tapis?" was the quick, eager question.

"Yes."

"What, Dick?"

"The commander-in-chief wants me to go at once to North Castle with a message to General Lee to bring the troops and come over here."

"Say, Dick, I'm going along!"

Bob's face shone with eagerness and excitement.

Dick hesitated.

"Oh, I'm going!" declared Bob, who noted the hesitation. "You shan't say no! We'll be safer together, Dick, and—I want to go!"

"All right, old man," said Dick; "I shall be glad to have you along."

"Good for you!—but look at that horse over yonder! Those redcoats have their hands full, haven't they?"

"Yes; the horse seems to be hard to catch."

"You're right! I doubt if they catch him at all."

The redcoats kept closing in on the horse and forcing him down the slope toward the water.

Probably they thought that when they got the animal to the water's edge, and closed in around him, they would capture him easily enough.

This was a reasonable supposition.

The horse ran here and there, backward and forward, kicking up his heels, and he seemed to be enjoying himself hugely.

Perhaps he looked upon it as a game, and thought the soldiers were merly playing it with him.

The comedy was furnishing amusement for a large number of spectators, for a great many of the patriot soldiers were watching from Fort Lee, while hundreds of redcoats were looking down from Fort Washington.

The soldiers who were trying to catch the horse were perhaps the only persons who were not enjoying themselves.

But those who furnish amusement for others' enjoyment can scarcely be expected to enjoy it themselves.

Down the soldiers forced the frisky horse, closer and closer to the water's edge.

It looked as though they would soon be victorious and the animal would be captured.

At last the horse stood at the very edge of the water.

The soldiers now began closing in on the animal.

They no doubt felt that at last they were to have their turn.

But they did not know the animal they were dealing with.

He was no common scrub of a horse.

He was a thoroughbred, and game as could be.

He was not done yet by any means.

He had undoubtedly made up his mind not to be captured, for just as a couple of the redcoats reached up to grasp him by the halter, he whirled, kicked out with both feet, knocking the men to the ground, and plunged boldly and unhesitatingly into the waters of the Hudson.

The brave act of the animal awakened the admiration of the watching hundreds.

A cheer went up from them.

"Hurrah for the horse!" cried Bob. "There's a horse worth having!"

When the horse plunged into the river and began swimming boldly and strongly out into the stream, a peculiar look came into Dick's eyes.

"Come, Bob!" he said, in an excited undertone, and he hastened away down the slope toward the river bank.

Bob followed, and experienced some difficulty in keeping pace with his friend.

"What is it, Dick?" he asked; but Dick did not reply.

He did not utter a word until he reached the water's edge.

Then he shaded his eyes with his hand and looked across the river at the horse swimming so boldly.

He looked long and earnestly, and then he suddenly placed two fingers in his mouth and emitted a shrill, clear, piercing whistle that could easily be heard a long distance across the water.

Then a peculiar thing happened.

The horse had been swimming away from the shore in a diagonal direction, a direction that would have taken him a mile or more down stream, in case he succeeded in swimming across, as seemed to be his intention; but as soon as Dick emitted the whistle the horse changed its course, and



began swimming straight toward the point where Dick and Bob stood.

A cry of joy escaped Dick.

"It is he!" he cried, eagerly, excitedly. "It is Major, my noble horse, Bob!"

## CHAPTER II.

### MAJOR SAVES DICK'S LIFE.

On one of Dick's spying expeditions, in August, when the British were over on Long Island, Dick had captured a magnificent horse.

The animal was a thoroughbred, and was the favorite charger of General Howe.

Dick had been in the British headquarters, on Brooklyn Heights, and was discovered and chased.

He had leaped upon the horse and fled, making his escape.

He had ridden inland, but had finally got back to the vicinity of the British troops, and on being discovered—it was at night, of course—he had ridden Major into the East River, and the magnificent animal had swum across the river.

It was a wonderful feat for a horse to accomplish, and as soon as Dick had seen this horse plunge into the Hudson so boldly and start to swim across, the thought had come to him that it might be Major.

And now, after whistling to the animal, and noting that it changed its course, Dick was sure that the horse was Major.

Dick had been forced to leave the horse behind when he and the members of the company of "Liberty Boys" had made their escape from Fort Washington when the garrison had been surrendered to the British by Colonel Magaw.

There had been neither time nor opportunity to think about his horse.

But Dick had thought of Major many times since reaching Fort Lee and safety, and the first thing that had popped into his mind when the commander-in-chief told him he wished him to make a trip to North Castle was, "How I wish I had Major now!"

It may be easily imagined, therefore, with what delight Dick realized that it was his gallant charger that was out there in the river swimming toward him from the opposite side of the stream.

"Glorious old Major!" murmured Dick. "How I hope he will be able to swim across in safety!"

"Well, if he swam the East River, I think he will be able

to make it all right, Dick," said Bob, his face as excited-looking almost as Dick's.

"I think he will be able to make it, Bob. It's a big swim, though, especially for a horse."

The youths watched the horse eagerly, and presently Dick placed his fingers in his mouth and whistled again.

It was a strange spectacle.

Doubtless none of those who were watching the horse, with the possible exception of Dick, had ever seen a horse attempt such a feat of swimming, and the majority doubted the animal's ability to reach the shore.

Some of the soldiers laid wagers on the affair, some wagering that the horse would get across and others that he would not.

Dick never took his eyes off the horse swimming so bravely out there in the deep water of the mighty Hudson.

Closer and closer the animal drew.

He was half way across, and still swimming strongly.

Closer still he came.

Presently he was two-thirds of the way across.

Then three-fourths of the way.

Then Dick turned his eyes to his companion for an instant.

"He's beginning to labor, Bob!" he said, a slight tremor in his voice.

"I notice it, Dick," was the reply; "I'm afraid he can't make it."

Dick emitted another whistle.

The horse was less than a quarter of a mile away now, and of course heard the whistle plainly.

The youths, watching him so closely, saw the horse swam somewhat stronger for a few moments, and then he began laboring again.

Suddenly Dick threw off his coat and shoes.

"What are you going to do, Dick?" cried Bob in alarm.

"I'm going out to meet Major, Bob."

The youth's voice was grim and determined.

"But you will chill to death in the water, Dick. It is too cold; you will have a cramp before you go fifty yards."

"I will risk it, Bob. I have been in cold water before, and am not afraid. Major saved my life more than once, and I am not going to stand here and see him drown!"

"But what can you do, Dick? You can't help him swim."

"I can encourage him. That's the way I did the night we swam the East River. He would never have made it alone, but with me to encourage him, he kept up the struggle and got across. I'm going out to meet him, and I'll help him to get to the shore, or I'll go down with him!"



Bob saw his friend was in deadly earnest and said no more, save to caution him.

Dick did not walk slowly down and feel his way into the old waters of the Hudson.

He was a youth who believed in taking the bull by the horns, and he leaped head first into the water with a great splash, going under out of sight.

A few moments later he came up, and taking his bearings, he swam toward the struggling horse with strong strokes.

Dick was a fine swimmer.

He felt at home in the Hudson.

He had lived within a mile of the noble stream all his life, and had been in swimming in the stream hundreds of times.

He had swam the Hudson many times, but never when the water was at almost the freezing point, as was the case to-day.

Still, as he had told Bob, he had been swimming in very cold water at various times, and he felt sure that he could swim out to where Major was and back to the shore again in safety.

He was willing to risk it for the sake of saving his noble horse from a watery grave.

"Be careful, Dick!" he heard Bob call, and then he headed straight for Major, swimming vigorously.

He knew that the more he exerted himself the less liable he would be to become chilled or get the cramp.

He was a rapid swimmer and he succeeded in reaching Major very quickly.

"Good boy! Brave boy, Major!" he called, as he came near the struggling horse, and the noble animal uttered a whinny which voiced his delight and appreciation of the kind words from his young master as plainly as the words of a human being could have done it.

"Keep up, old fellow!" said Dick. "Keep on swimming, brave boy! We'll swim to the shore together! We'll soon be safe! Have courage!"

Dick spoke to the horse just as he would have spoken to an individual, and who shall say the horse did not understand him?

The animal did not, of course, understand the words spoken, but he understood what was meant—there is no doubt regarding that.

Animals understand what is said by the tone of the speaker.

If a person speaks harshly, the tone is harsh, and the animal understands it perfectly.

If you say "Kitty! Kitty!" to a cat, it will come and rub against you; if you say "Scat!" it will run away from

you as fast as it can go. The cat does not know the difference between the words "Kitty" and "Scat!" but it distinguishes the difference in the tone, and understands what is meant as perfectly as though it understood your words.

It was so with Major, and the knowledge that his young master was near, and was speaking encouragingly to him, gave him renewed strength.

He swam more strongly and seemed to get along much better than he had been doing.

Dick reached the horse's side, and taking hold of the animal's mane, patted him on the neck.

"Good boy!—brave boy!" he said in an encouraging tone.

And Major whinnied in reply.

Then the two swam along side by side.

Slowly but surely they neared the shore.

The soldiers up on the heights at Fort Lee were watching the youth and the horse with interest.

Their admiration of the brave act of the youth was intense.

Bob, from the shore, was watching the progress of the two with absorbing interest.

He was afraid Dick might be taken with a cramp, or that the horse might strike him with its hoof.

Of the latter he need not have had any fear, however.

The horse was very careful not to strike Dick.

Nearer and nearer they drew to the shore.

The horse was laboring, but with Dick to encourage him there seemed to be no doubt but that he would reach the shore in safety.

They were within twenty-five yards of the shore, when all of a sudden Dick was seized with cramp.

He uttered a cry of pain; it was wrung from him, in fact.

His legs seemed to draw up, his body to double up.

He could not do a thing to help himself, could not swim a stroke.

As Dick uttered the involuntary cry of pain, Major looked down at his young master, mild surprise in his eyes.

He seemed puzzled.

He did not seem to be able to interpret the sound—at first.

A moment later, however, he proved that he was possessed of almost human understanding.

He opened his mouth and caught hold of Dick's stout shirt with his teeth!

Then he seemed to redouble his efforts.

It was plain that he was exerting himself to reach the shore as quickly as possible.

Bob had heard Dick's cry and was terribly frightened.

He knew what had happened.



He was about to throw off his outer clothing and plunge in to go to Dick's aid, when he saw the action of the horse.

"Major will save him!" he cried, and then he stood there watching the struggle with eager eyes.

Would Major succeed in reaching the shore?

Bob could only wait and hope for the best.

He watched closely, and presently made up his mind that the horse would succeed.

He held himself in readiness to plunge into the water, however, should Major let loose of Dick.

It was a hard fight, but Major won.

He reached the shore at last, and Bob seized Dick and began rubbing his arms and slapping his legs to start the blood to circulating again.

Major stood near, watching Dick and Bob with seeming solicitation, the while he shook as with the ague.

He was chilled to the bone by the cold water.

A few minutes later Dick was able to stand up, and then he pounded and slapped himself vigorously, until he was almost as good and strong as ever.

Then he patted Major's neck.

"You saved my life, old fellow!" he said. "You are a horse worth having!"

Major whinnied, as much as to say, "I understand, and I am glad I was able to be instrumental in saving your life."

Dick donned his coat and shoes, and then, followed by Bob and Major, he walked up to the fort.

The soldiers crowded around the trio, and when they learned all the facts there was a babel of exclamations.

They praised Dick for swimming out to meet the horse, and then they cheered when they were told how the horse had saved Dick's life.

This part of it they had been unable to see, owing to the fact that there were trees which had shut out their view when the horse and youth were within a hundred yards of the shore.

They could not get over expressing admiration for the horse, and if it had been possible to spoil him, he would have been spoiled, for they petted him and rubbed and patted him till Major must have been somewhat puzzled over it all.

Dick instructed some of the "Liberty Boys" to rub Major down while he went and changed his clothes. This he quickly did.

Then he hastened back to the room where Generals Washington and Greene were awaiting his coming.

He explained what it was that had caused his delay.

"I will not lose any time, however," he said in conclusion. "Major is a fast horse, and a wonderful stayer,

and I can travel a third farther in a given length of time on him than I could on an ordinary horse."

General Washington told him the slight delay in starting was of no consequence, and then he gave the youth the dispatch which was to be given to General Lee.

"I will start immediately," said Dick; "and, by the way, my friend, Bob Estabrook, wishes to accompany me."

"Very well," said the commander-in-chief; "be careful, take care of yourselves; don't let the British capture you, and deliver the dispatch to General Lee at the earliest possible moment."

"You may depend upon me to do that, your excellency," said Dick earnestly.

"I am sure of that, Dick. And now, good-by, and God speed!"

Both generals shook hands with Dick, after which he saluted and withdrew.

Ten minutes later he and Bob, mounted on Major and another horse that had been procured for the occasion, rode out of the fort and away toward the north.

"Now to deliver the dispatch to General Lee!" said Dick.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE ADVENTURE ON THE FERRYBOAT.

The youths rode northward at a gallop.

"How far up are you going before crossing the river, Dick?" Bob asked.

"I think we will go up to Dobb's Ferry, Bob."

"Aren't you afraid there will be lots of redcoats there?"

"Perhaps there will be; but so will there be at any point below Dobb's Ferry."

"That's so."

"Yes, we will be in danger, but will have to take our chances, and do the best we can."

"One good thing, it is safer on this side of the river than on the other, Dick."

"Yes; we needn't worry about the redcoats until after we have crossed the river."

They rode swiftly, and reached Dobb's Ferry—or rather the landing-place opposite Dobb's Ferry—at about noon.

The youths rode down to the landing and Dick waved his handkerchief.

Presently the ferryboat was seen coming across the river.

When it reached the landing the youths rode on board.

Then they dismounted and stood at their horses' heads



One thing they noticed which gave them some little uneasiness.

There were four British soldiers on board the ferryboat. They were sitting together near the front end of the boat. They cast furtive glances at the two youths, and talked among themselves in tones too low to be heard a few feet distant.

When the owner of the ferryboat came to get pay for taking Dick and Bob across the river, he managed to say in a low tone:

"You had better look out for those four redcoats yonder if you are patriots."

"Thank you," said Dick. "We have our eyes on them." Presently the soldiers arose, and one of them sauntered up to where Dick and Bob stood.

"Traveling?" he asked, carelessly.

"No—just going somewhere," replied Dick, coolly.

He did not fancy having to be catechised by a redcoat.

The Briton looked at Dick sharply.

"Ah, indeed!" he remarked. "Where might you be going?"

"We might be going to Halifax," was Dick's cool reply; "but we aren't."

"Well, where are you going, then?"

Dick looked the fellow squarely in the eyes.

"Across the river!" he replied.

The redcoat flushed.

He was a pretty cool sort of fellow himself, however.

He did not allow himself to show his anger or discomfort in words.

"So I supposed," he said; "and after you cross the river, then where?"

"That is none of your business!"

Dick's answer was prompt and decisive.

The redcoat flushed again, and it was evident that he was becoming quite angry.

He would not be able to hold his temper in check much longer.

As for Dick, he felt that a clash would come anyway, and did not feel like prevaricating or trying to softsoap the redcoat.

"See here," said the Briton, "you are rather saucy for a young fellow!"

"Young fellows have as much right to be saucy as old fellows," replied Dick, coolly.

"I'm not so sure of that."

"I am; anyway, you are deserving of being talked saucy to. You are asking questions where you have no business to, and are trying to pry into affairs that are not yours."

"That is where you are wrong, young man."

"Is that so?"

"Yes; I and my companions yonder are stationed on this boat for the purpose of seeing who cross the river. Those whom we think are loyal to the British cause we let go on their way in peace, but those whom we size up to be rebels we take prisoners and turn them over to General Howe."

"Oh, that's it, eh?"

Dick had known this all the time.

"Yes, that's it, and you will do well to be more civil in your manner and speech."

"So as to prejudice you and your companions, in my favor, eh?"

"Not exactly; but if you are loyal, there is no need of your being saucy, as we are friends. If you persist in being saucy and refusing to answer my questions, I shall be forced to form an unfavorable opinion of you."

"And that would be too bad!" said Dick, sarcasm plainly discernible in the tone of his voice.

The redcoat frowned.

"You seem bent on arousing my resentment," he said. "Well, have your own way about it. I will ask you once more, however, where are you going?"

"And I will answer, once more, none of your business!"

The Briton turned and motioned to his companions, who were watching the three with interest.

The three approached quickly.

"Make these two youths prisoners!" the redcoat said sternly, and he turned and indicated the youths.

Dick had whispered instructions to Bob, and at this instant they drew their pistols, each having a weapon in either hand, and pointed them at the redcoats.

"Stand back! Keep your distance, or you are dead men!" said Dick sternly.

"W-why, what does t-this m-mean?" stammered the redcoat who had done the talking to the youths.

"It means business!" retorted Dick. "You fellows right about, face, march back to the end of the boat, and stay there, or we will shoot you dead and throw your bodies overboard to the fish! Do you hear? Right about!—face!"

The redcoats hesitated.

They were four to two.

And those two were mere youths!

But they were dangerous-looking youths, there was no doubt regarding that.

The British soldiers were pretty good judges, and they did not like the cold glitter in the eyes of the youths.

It said "shoot!"

The redcoats did not doubt but that the youths would shoot if they were not obeyed.

The leader of the redcoats stood glaring at Dick for a



few moments, like a tiger at bay, and then he turned to his companions and said, "Come."

He led the way back to the end of the boat.

The four became engaged in a spirited conversation.

Of course they spoke in low tones, so Dick and Bob could not understand what was said.

They kept glancing back at the youths.

"We'll have to look out for those fellows when we go to leave the boat, Dick," said Bob in a low tone.

"Yes; they're concocting some scheme to try to get the upper hand of us!"

"That is just what they are doing."

The owner of the boat, who was a patriot, evidently, had witnessed the affair between the youths and the redcoats, and there was great admiration in his eyes as he looked at the two youths standing there, pistols in hand.

There was no doubt but that the redcoats would like to turn the tables on the youths who had defied them and forced them to walk away at the muzzle of pistols.

They would not let Dick and Bob escape if they could help it.

And the youths were determined to escape if they possibly could.

It would not do to allow themselves to be made prisoners.

Dick was the bearer of a dispatch to General Lee, and if the British captured them the dispatch would be undelivered, and this would be a terrible drawback, as General Washington wished the troops under Lee to join him at Hackensack at once.

The boat was now nearing the shore.

The time was coming when action would be required, if the youths were to get away from the redcoats.

"We must disarm them, Bob," said Dick in a low tone; "if we don't, they will shoot us in the back when we are leaving the boat."

"That's so, Dick."

"Come, then; we will force them to lay their arms in a heap on the deck of the boat!"

The youths advanced toward the British soldiers.

The four saw the youths coming, and stared at them in surprise, and half-fearful, also.

"Well, what do you want now?" asked the leader of the four.

"I command you to lay your muskets and pistols in a heap on the deck!" said Dick, sternly.

"And if we refuse?"

"Then we will shoot you down and throw your bodies in the river!"

"You wouldn't dare!"

"We will do it!" said Dick, sternly; "we do not intend

letting you shoot us in the back as we leave the boat. Lay your arms on the deck!"

The redcoats hesitated.

Evidently it was very galling to have to obey the order of a youth like Dick.

They did not fancy the idea of four British soldiers having to knuckle under to two American youths.

They were well satisfied now that the youths were "rebels."

A keen suspicion had entered their minds.

They had heard of Dick Slater (known to the British as "Sam Sly") and Bob Estabrook, the boy spies, and they were confident that these two youths were the two spies in question.

They were aware, furthermore, that there was a price on the heads of the youths.

General Howe had a standing offer of one hundred pounds for the capture of either of the two boy spies.

The suspicion that the two youths confronting them were the youths in question, on whose heads a price was set, did much toward helping cause them to obey Dick's command.

They knew the boy spies were dangerous youths, and they felt that unless they did as they were ordered they would be shot down in cold blood.

So they made a virtue of necessity, and slowly and reluctantly deposited their muskets and pistols on the deck of the boat.

"Now," said Dick, in the same stern tone he had been using, "you four fellows march to the other end of the boat!"

The four, having deposited their weapons, did not hesitate now, but walked promptly to the other end of the boat.

"Now, Bob, you take hold of the horses' bits and lead them off the boat as soon as we reach the shore," said Dick; "I will see to it that the redcoats do not use undue haste in coming forward."

Bob replaced his pistols in his belt.

Then he took the horses by the bits and led them forward, so as to be ready to leave the boat as soon as it touched the shore.

Dick stood a few feet behind the horses, facing the redcoats at the farther end of the boat.

He had his pistols leveled.

"Now, when the boat reaches the shore, you fellows stand still, right where you are!" he said. "If you start to advance, I will open fire upon you!"

Presently the boat reached the shore.

The men lowered the drawbridge connecting the boat with the shore, and Bob led the horses ashore.



"Stand where you are!" cried Dick, and he slowly backed off the boat.

The redcoats obeyed, though it was evident that they could hardly restrain themselves from rushing forward to where their weapons lay in a pile on the deck.

Dick backed till he was beside Major, and then he suddenly stuck his pistols in his belt, cried "Mount, Bob, and away!" and leaped into the saddle.

Bob was almost as quick, and they put spurs to their horses and rode up the bank of the river at a gallop.

At the same instant a band of a dozen horsemen came in sight not more than two hundred yards away.

The redcoats on the boat yelled to the newcomers, whose red coats proclaimed them to be British troopers, and pointed toward Dick and Bob.

The troopers evidently understood, for they uttered shouts and started in pursuit.

"We'll have to ride now, Bob!" said Dick. "Those red-coat troopers have given chase!"

"You are right, Dick!" said Bob.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE SHOT FROM THE CABIN.

The youths put their horses to their best pace.

Major was an exceptionally speedy traveler, and the horse Bob bestrode was not much behind the other.

Both were magnificent animals.

They rapidly left the troopers behind.

The horses of the troopers were only mediocre animals.

By the time they had gone a mile Dick and Bob had lost sight of the redcoats.

"I guess they won't try to follow us farther," said Dick.

"I think not," coincided Bob.

They allowed the horses to slacken up somewhat.

They were still going at a speed equal to the best of the redcoats' horses, however.

They rode into Tarrytown a little more than an hour later.

They did not linger there, as they feared they might run across some redcoats.

Then, too, there were a great number of Tories in Tarrytown, and the majority knew Dick and Bob by sight.

They might try to make the youths trouble.

As they were riding along the street a man who was standing on the porch of a tavern stepped back and stood within the doorway, watching the youths.

"It is Dick Slater and Bob Estabrook!" he said. "They are on their way home on a visit, no doubt. Well, I'll just see if I can't turn this to my own advantage."

Unconscious of the scrutiny of the man, the youths rode onward, and leaving the village behind, rode rapidly toward their homes.

"We'll stop and take dinner with the folks," said Dick.

"We'll be a little bit late," laughed Bob; "it is nearly two o'clock now."

"Yes, but we'll have no trouble in getting enough to eat, both for ourselves and for our horses."

"I guess you are right, Dick; and we'll get something else, too."

"What, Bob?"

"Some kisses from two of the prettiest and sweetest little girls in Westchester county."

"Now you are talking, Bob, old man!"

Dick's face lighted up as he spoke.

In his imagination he saw the sweet, beautiful face of Alice Estabrook, Bob's sister, and his sweetheart.

Bob was as dead in love with Dick's sister Edith as Dick was with Bob's sister Alice.

So there was ample reason why both should feel happy at the prospect of stopping for even a brief period at their homes—the two houses being less than a quarter of a mile apart.

Fifteen minutes later the youths drew rein in front of Bob's home.

They were seen as they stopped, and Bob's parents and sister came running out to the front gate to greet the youths.

The youths leaped from their horses to return the greetings.

Mrs. Estabrook and Alice gave Bob a hug and a kiss, and then shook hands with Dick.

As Dick was greeting Alice, Mr. and Mrs. Estabrook considerably turned their backs and talked eagerly to Bob, and Dick took advantage of the opportunity to steal a kiss from Alice.

The youths quickly explained their errand, and when the folks learned that the youths were to be there only an hour their faces fell.

"However, even that is better than not getting to see you at all," said Mrs. Estabrook.

The rest coincided with this view of the case.

"Now I will ride over home and see mother and Edith," said Dick. "I'll run over a few minutes after dinner."

He looked at Alice as he said this, and she blushed.

"Tell your mother and Edith that I will run over and



say 'how do you do' as soon as I have put my horse in the stable and fed him," said Bob.

"Go right along, now," said his father; "I'll take care of your horse."

"All right, and thank you, father," said Bob.

Then he and Dick made their way over to Dick's home, and were given a joyous greeting by Mrs. Salter and Edith.

Bob stayed only a few minutes, as he said dinner would be awaiting him.

"I'll be over after dinner, though, Edith," he said, and the beautiful girl blushed.

"Oh, Dick, is it indeed true that Fort Washington has been captured by the British?" asked his mother, as Dick was eating dinner.

"It is true, mother," said Dick soberly. "It is a hard blow, but Right is bound to triumph in the end. The people of America will yet win their liberty."

"I hope so, Dick! I hope so!"

"I am sure of it, mother. Things look dark just now, but I have the utmost faith in General Washington. Nothing seems to daunt him. We will win in the end."

"And oh, brother!" said Edith, her eyes sparkling with excitement, "was it true about the wonderful manner in which your company of 'Liberty Boys' charged the British?"

"Yes, it was true, Edith."

"Oh, it must have been glorious! You don't know how proud we all were of you and Bob when we heard it!"

"Especially proud of Bob, eh, little sister?" remarked Dick, teasingly.

"Don't tease, Dick," said Edith; "we were proud of both of you."

"I know that, Edie; I was just joking."

"Well, for that matter, I could divide it up by saying that Alice Estabrook was especially proud of you, Dick," smiled Edith.

Dick laughed.

"Bravo! little sister!" he said. "Well, Bob and I shall always try to so conduct ourselves that you may be proud of us."

"I am sure of that, my son," said Mrs. Slater.

They conversed as Dick ate, and presently his mother's face sobered, and she said:

"Dick, Mr. Estabrook tells us that there is a reward of one hundred pounds offered for you and Bob, and he says that should you be captured you will undoubtedly be hung, as your work as spies has incensed the British generals against you."

"We have heard that a reward was offered for our cap-

ture," said Dick quietly; "it doesn't bother us much, however."

"But it will incite the British and Tories to try to capture you in order to win the reward, Dick," said Edith.

"Yes, that's true; but we are not afraid of the British. Just let them catch and hang us if they can!"

Dick's mother's face grew grave.

She feared for the safety of her boy.

"You must be very careful, Dick," she said.

"I am always careful, mother," the youth replied.

"Yes, indeed; you must be very careful," said Edith.

After Dick had eaten he talked with his mother and sister a few minutes longer, and then went over to Mr. Estabrook's to see Alice.

He met Bob, who was just starting over to see Edith.

Bob was leading his horse.

"I've said good-by to the folks," he explained, "and I'm taking my horse along, so I won't have to come back home to get him."

"That's a good idea, Bob," said Dick; "I'll be back in a few minutes."

"You needn't hurry on my account, old man," with a grin; "take your time."

Dick laughed.

"All right," he said; "we must not lose too much time here, however. Business first and pleasure later, Bob, my boy."

Dick entered the house, and was soon happy in the company of his sweetheart, Alice.

The time passed very swiftly, and he had been there three-quarters of an hour when they were suddenly startled by the abrupt entrance of Mr. Estabrook.

"You will have to fly, Dick!" he exclaimed. "A band of British troopers is coming up the road! They will be here in a few minutes!"

"Oh, is that all?" smiled Dick. "I thought you were going to fire me out because I was talking to Alice."

"Oh, fly, Dick!" cried Alice, her face paling. "What if they should catch you? They would shoot you or hang you!"

"I'm not afraid, sweetheart," said Dick, and then he kissed the beautiful, frightened and trembling girl, shook hands with Mr. Estabrook, and ran out of the house.

Glancing up the road, he saw a band of British troopers coming. They were less than a quarter of a mile away and were coming at a gallop.

Dick could reach his home by taking a short cut across the lot, and by so doing he could keep Mr. Estabrook's house between himself and the approaching redcoats, and throwing a kiss to Alice, he started off at a swift run.



He ran straight to the stable, and untying Major, led him out into the road.

He called to Bob, who came out of the house.

"What! not going so soon, Dick?" Bob exclaimed, reproachfully. "Why, we haven't been here any time at all."

"We've got to go, Bob," was the reply. "Yonder comes a band of redcoats!"

Edith uttered a little scream.

"Oh, go!—go at once!" she cried. "You will be captured and murdered!"

Bob glanced up the road; then, snatching a kiss from Edith, he ran out to the road and bounded into the saddle.

"Now we're off!" he cried.

Then the two cried "Good-by!" to Mrs. Slater and Edith, waved their hands and rode away down the road at a gallop.

The redcoats saw them and set up a yell.

They lashed their horses to renewed speed.

They knew who Dick and Bob were, and were anxious to catch them.

The youths did not fear their pursuers, however.

Their horses had had a good rest, and were better animals, anyway; hence, being fresh, while the redcoats' horses had been ridden some distance, doubtless the youths felt confident their horses would easily pull away from the others.

This speedily proved to be the case.

The youths could have run right away from the redcoats.

But they did not wish to do so.

It was their desire to draw the troopers as far away from the homes of their folks as possible.

They were afraid that, if they should run right away from their pursuers, they would return to the homes of Mrs. Slater and Mr. Estabrook and do some damage.

They would be angry and ripe for anything.

So the youths held their horses in and did not let them go as fast as they could have gone.

The redcoats supposed they were going their best, however, and kept yelling at the fugitives.

Dick and Bob could not understand the words spoken, but supposed the redcoats were yelling for them to stop.

This, of course, the youths had no intention of doing.

They were bound for North Castle on business, and they were bound to get there, redcoats or no redcoats.

It was now about half-past three o'clock.

The youths expected to reach North Castle by half-past five.

If they kept up their present speed they would do it easily.

But they did not expect to do this.

They would lead the redcoats a chase for three or four miles, and then they would run away from them, and after giving them the slip would take it a little bit easier.

The youths followed out this plan exactly.

When they had drawn the redcoats three and a half or four miles away from the homes of their folks, they urged their horses on to greater speed, and quickly ran away from their pursuers.

The redcoats fell back rapidly, and presently were lost sight of.

Then the youths slowed up and let the horses take it easy.

As they were riding along the road, which wound here and there through the timber, they presently came even with a log cabin, which stood back a hundred yards from the road.

They glanced at the cabin, and, seeing no one about, paid no more attention.

Suddenly their attention was attracted to the cabin in rather a rude fashion.

There came the sharp, whiplike crack of a rifle, and a bullet knocked Dick's hat off.

The bullet went through the youth's hair, but did not touch the scalp.

"Say, that is getting a bit too close to suit me!" said Dick. "I'm going to see what that shooter means, anyway, by making so free."

Dick turned Major's head and rode toward the cabin at a gallop.

He expected to hear another shot, but was pleasantly disappointed.

Reaching the cabin, he stopped Major, and leaping to the ground, tried the door.

It was fastened.

He pounded upon it.

"Open the door, or I will break it down!" he cried.

There was no answer.

Dick pounded on the door more vigorously than before, and called upon the occupant of the cabin to open the door once again, but received no reply.

At this instant Bob uttered a shout.

He had followed closely and had ridden around to the rear of the cabin.

"There he goes!" he cried. "He has gone out at the back door, Dick, and is making off!"

Bob drew a pistol and fired at the fleeing man, but did not hit him.

Dick was beside his friend in a jiffy, and was just in time to see the fugitive disappear in the timber.



"Let's follow the scoundrel!" cried Bob, excitedly; but Dick shook his head.

"No, we must hasten onward," he said; "let the fellow go. He must be crazy."

They looked in the cabin, but it was empty.

Then the youths mounted their horses and resumed their interrupted journey.

They arrived at the headquarters of General Lee and his seven thousand troops, at North Castle, at twenty-five minutes past five.

## CHAPTER V.

### A PLOTTER IN A HIGH PLACE.

The youths hastened to report to General Lee.

Somehow Dick, who had seen General Lee on several occasions, did not like him very well.

The youth could not have explained the reason for his not liking the general, but the fact remained just the same.

He did not let anything of the state of his feelings show, however, but delivered the dispatches sent by the commander-in-chief, and, at the suggestion of General Lee, he and Bob sat down to wait till the dispatches had been read.

General Lee read the dispatches, and then sat for several minutes gazing at the floor in a deep study.

Dick watched the man closely.

Presently General Lee rose to his feet and paced backward and forward, his hands behind his back.

He was still looking at the floor.

He seemed entirely oblivious of the presence of the youths.

Dick was puzzled.

More, he was vexed.

He knew that the dispatches contained absolute and unequivocal orders for General Lee to bring the seven thousand troops at once across the river and join General Washington and the other portion of the army at Hackensack.

After reading the orders, the proper thing for General Lee to do would have been to act at once, to send orders for the troops to begin getting ready to march immediately.

There was nothing to ponder, no excuse for study.

The thing to do was to act.

But General Lee was not acting.

He was walking the floor, and evidently in a deep study.

Presently General Lee paused and turned, facing Dick and Bob.

"How soon will you be ready to return to the commander-in-chief?" he asked.

Dick looked surprised, as indeed he was.

"We could be ready to start back as soon as our horses have an hour's rest," he replied. "But we might as well wait and go with the troops, might we not?"

The general looked slightly disconcerted, Dick thought.

"You can't do that," he said.

"Why not?"

"For the reason that the troops are not going."

General Lee spoke in a tone of forced calmness, but it was evident that he was watching the youths to see how the announcement would strike them.

"What!" exclaimed Dick, incredulously, while Bob stared in amazement. "Why, the commander-in-chief's orders in those dispatches are explicit and emphatic. He told me himself that the troops must be brought over at the earliest possible moment."

In his excitement, Dick forgot that he was speaking to a general—to the second officer in command of the entire Continental Army, in fact.

General Lee flushed.

His eyes glowed with an angry light.

"Young man," he said, his voice trembling, so great was his anger, "do you know who you are talking to?"

"Yes, I know who I am talking to," replied Dick. "You are General Lee, second in command to General Washington; I know, also, that it is your duty to obey the orders of the commander-in-chief—which you do not seem inclined to do!"

General Lee fairly gasped.

The audacity of the youth was almost beyond belief.

"What! do you dare speak in such fashion to me, General Lee, commander of one-half the Continental forces!" he cried. "Zounds! I will have you arrested and thrown in the guard-house if you are not more careful!"

"General Lee," said Dick calmly, "why do you say the troops will not be sent across the river?"

"That is none of your business, you impertinent little hound! They will not be sent, and I shall give my reason to General Washington, but not to you!"

General Lee paused and paced the floor for a few moments, then continued:

"I will overlook your insolence of a few moments ago, young man, but you must be more careful in future. I will overlook it for the reason that I wish you to be the bearer of my answer to the commander-in-chief. You may return while I write the answer. In one hour return, and you will be ready for you."

Dick bowed—he could not trust himself to speak—an



he and Bob took their departure from headquarters without an instant's delay.

As soon as they were outside, Dick's anger bubbled over.

"Bob," he said hotly, "General Lee is a scoundrel!"

Bob looked around nervously.

"Be careful what you say, Dick," he said; "some one might hear you and report your language to the general, and then you would get into serious trouble."

"I can't help it, Bob; if I were to be with him five minutes I would tell him the same thing to his face!"

"There does seem to be something wrong about him," Bob acknowledged; "I understand that the commander-in-chief deems it absolutely necessary that the troops be sent to his assistance immediately, and it seems very strange work on the part of General Lee to refuse to send them."

"It is gross insubordination, Bob! In fact, it is bordering on treason! There is no telling what may happen, if he does not join the commander-in-chief with the troops he has here."

"That's right; supposing the British to the number of fifteen to twenty thousand should cross the river and move down on the less than five thousand men at Hackensack! It would mean the massacre or capture of the entire force."

"So it would, Bob."

"I wonder why he refuses to send the men?"

"It is hard to say. He is, to my way of thinking, a schemer, however, and no doubt he has some scheme of his own on hand."

"Let's see; he's the second in command, being next under General Washington, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"Um! Supposing something should happen to General Washington, Dick!"

Dick started, and looked at Bob quickly.

"Why, then, Lee would become commander-in-chief, Bob!" he exclaimed.

Bob nodded.

"So he would, Dick."

The youths gazed at each other for a few seconds in silence, then Dick said in an undertone of angry fierceness:

"The scheming scoundrel!"

"I guess that's about what he is!" agreed Bob.

And the youths were not so very far wrong in their estimate of General Lee.

History tells that this was just the sort of man that General Lee was.

Had the youths been gifted with the ability to read the mind of General Lee at that moment, they would have discovered that their estimate of him was correct.

Seated at his writing desk in the room the youths had just left, General Lee was thinking rapidly, and getting ready to write to the commander-in-chief.

"This is my chance!" he said to himself, with a thrill of wicked joy; "the capture of Fort Washington will give me something to work on. I can write to my friends in Congress, telling of the incompetency of Washington, and can point to the fall of the fort and the loss of three thousand of our best troops to prove my words. Then, by withholding my troops, and leaving Washington to shift for himself, I will be able to accomplish my object, for he will be defeated and himself and army captured by the British at an early date. Then my appointment to the position of commander-in-chief will follow naturally and promptly. Ah! it is the chance of my life!"

The arch-conspirator rose to his feet and paced the floor for a few moments.

Then he sat down at his desk and took up the pen.

"What excuse shall I make to Washington?" he muttered; "I know: I will make no definite excuses at all, but will simply say that the work of moving the army just at this time would be impossible, as I am beset by difficulties, the nature of which I will explain when we meet. That will be best; and then, if my plans work, we will not meet. Washington will be captured, will lose prestige, and I will be appointed commander-in-chief! Ah! it is a grand scheme, and one which is almost certain of success!"

Then General Lee began writing with great rapidity.

At last he threw down the quill, with a sigh of relief, and looked at his watch.

"Those messengers will be here in a few minutes," he murmured. "Well, the answer to General Washington's dispatches will be ready for them."

He dried the ink on the paper, folded the paper, sealed it, and then sat awaiting the coming of Dick and Bob.

"I don't like that young scoundrel!" he thought, referring to Dick; "he is altogether too saucy, and when I have been made commander-in-chief the first thing I shall do will be to punish him for his language to me to-day!"

Meantime the youths had made their way toward a company of soldiers whose quarters were next to those occupied by the company of "Liberty Boys" when they had been at North Castle.

They were well acquainted with the majority of the members of the company, and knew they could depend on getting something to eat.

They ate supper with their friends, and the conversation naturally turned on the matter that had brought the youths to North Castle.



Dick told them that the commander-in-chief had sent orders to General Lee to bring the troops across the river at once, and then added that the general had said he was not going to a <sup>nus</sup> it.

This occasioned great surprise among the soldiers.

They could not understand it.

Indeed, they could hardly bring themselves to believe it.

"It is the truth," said Dick; "General Lee told me so with his own lips. He got angry when I told him I thought he ought to obey orders, and threatened to have me arrested and imprisoned in the guardhouse."

"It is very strange," said one of the soldiers; "it would look as though the general was afraid to leave this position."

"He must have some other reason," said another; "it looks as though he wished the commander-in-chief's army to be captured."

"I am confident that he is a schemer," said Dick. "I don't like his looks; nor have I from the very first time I saw him. He looks like a man who would do almost anything to further his own interests."

The discussion continued throughout the time consumed in eating, and then, when the hour was almost up, Dick and Bob returned to General Lee's headquarters.

The general received them stiffly.

"Are you ready to start on the return trip?" he asked.

"We are," replied Dick, as coldly and stiffly as the other.

"And you will be able to get through to-night?"

"Perhaps," coldly; "we will get back to General Washington as quickly as possible. He needs the presence of every man in the Continental army, and needs it badly."

General Lee frowned.

He knew this was a slap at himself.

He ignored it, however.

"Here is my reply to General Washington," he said, handing Dick the letter he had written.

Dick took it and placed it in an inside pocket of his coat.

"Deliver that into the hands of General Washington at the earliest possible moment," he said.

"I will do so," the youth replied, quietly.

There was nothing further that General Lee had to say to the youths, and they took their departure.

Their horses had rested, and had been well fed, and the youths could go at once.

They saddled and bridled their horses, mounted, and then, saying good-by to their friends, rode away into the darkness.

The youths paused, when they had gone a mile or so, and

discussed the question of what route they should take in making the return trip.

"Shall we go back the same way we came, Bob?" asked Dick.

"I leave that to you, old man," was the reply; "you are more familiar with the country than I, and know better which will be the best way to go."

"Well, I think that will be the best way to go; it is just as near, and there is less likelihood of running across the redcoats, I think."

"And then we can stop a little while at home, eh, old man?"

"Perhaps, Bob."

"The folks will be anxious to know whether or not we got away from that gang of redcoats."

"So they will; well, we will stop long enough to let them know that we did."

The youths had ridden about half an hour when they saw a light off to the left hand.

They were in the timber, and the light looked as though it shone through under and over the door of a cabin.

"It's a light in that cabin the fellow was in who shot at us this afternoon, Dick!" said Bob, in a low, excited voice.

"I guess you are right, Bob!" agreed Dick.

"Say; let's take a look into the cabin, and see what sort of looking chap is in there!" suggested Bob.

"Agreed," said Dick.

The youths dismounted.

They tied their horses, and then walked toward the cabin, being guided by the light.

There was no window in the front of the cabin, but the youths remembered that there was a small one in the rear.

They stole around to the back of the cabin.

They reached the little window, but when they tried to look in they found their vision obscured by a cloth of some kind, which had been hung up in front of the window.

They finally succeeded in finding a small crack through which they could see, however, and the sight which met their gaze caused their blood to boil.

In the room were three men.

Two of the men wore the uniform of British soldiers; the other was a wicked-looking fellow who looked like a hunter or trapper.

There was another present—a beautiful girl of about seventeen years.

She was seated upon a rough stool, and her hands were tied together behind her back!

She was evidently a prisoner.



## CHAPTER VI.

## THE RESCUE.

The instant Dick's eyes fell upon the face of the girl he gave a start, and an exclamation almost escaped him.

He recognized the girl.

About two weeks before, when he was making his way from North Castle to Fort Washington with dispatches from the commander-in-chief to General Greene, he had stopped at a house to get something to eat, and await the coming of darkness, so that his movements would the better be hidden from prowling bands of redcoats.

While at the home of the girl, whose name was Esther Morton, some British officers had entered, and Dick had shot two of them down and escaped. The girl and her father, who were strong patriots, fearing they would be roughly treated, had accompanied Dick to the home of a neighbor, where he had left them.

And now, here was the girl a prisoner, and as Dick looked closer at the redcoats, he recognized one as being one of the officers who had entered the house that evening.

Dick whispered to Bob, and told him that he recognized the girl and one of the men.

Bob was greatly excited.

"That's a tough crowd in there, Dick!" he said; "what are we going to do?"

"Going to do the scoundrels an injury!" said Dick, in a fierce undertone.

"Listen!" whispered Bob.

The man whom Dick had recognized was standing in front of the girl and talking to her.

Dick pressed his ear close to the window, and could hear what was being said.

"I love you, Miss Morton—Esther!" the fellow was saying; "I wish to make you my wife. You know that."

"You take a strange way to show your love!" was the reply of the girl, her voice full of scorn.

"You drove me to it, Esther," was the reply; "I pleaded my love, but you scorned me. There was nothing else to do, as I have made up my mind that you shall be my wife, whether you wish to or not!"

"I will never be your wife, Stanley Marlow! I hate and despise you, and all your redcoated tribe! I would die before I would marry you!"

"What a brave girl!" thought Dick, as he watched the beautiful face and flashing eyes; "and what a scoundrel that officer is!"

Dick could hardly restrain himself from rushing into the cabin and shooting the redcoat down; but did manage to do

so. He wished to learn the whole scheme before doing anything.

The face of the man called Stanley Marlow grew dark with anger as he heard the girl's bold words, and his voice was rough in its sternness as he said:

"You will change your tune, Esther Morton, and change it very quickly, too, for I am going to make you my wife! See; here is the chaplain of our regiment, whom I have brought along, and who will perform the ceremony. We are going to be made man and wife, and at once!"

"Liar!" cried the girl; "I refuse to become your wife. He cannot perform the ceremony if I refuse."

"He can, and will do so!" was the decided reply. "Your refusal will amount to nothing."

"The scoundrel!" thought Dick. "He is a fiend! But Bob and I will spoil his well-laid plans!"

Esther Morton seemed stricken by the man's last words. She stared at him, and grew pale as death.

The scoundrel noted this, and laughed triumphantly.

"Now you are beginning to understand matters, I see!" he remarked, with a chuckle.

"You—fiend!" was all the girl could say.

And Marlow laughed again.

He seemed to feel that he held the whip-hand.

He looked upon the beautiful face of the girl with gloating eyes.

"You will soon be mine, sweet Esther!" he said, in a half-mocking tone; "get ready for the ceremony!"

"You will not dare do what you have threatened!" the girl said.

"I certainly will dare do what I have threatened!" in a determined, almost fierce tone; "Morris, get ready to perform the ceremony!"

The other redcoat, who, so Marlow claimed, was the chaplain of the regiment, said he was ready to perform the ceremony.

As a matter of fact, Dick did not believe the man was the chaplain of any regiment.

To the youth's eyes, he looked more like a confederate in crime of Marlow's.

However, it did not matter, as Dick did not intend the fellow should perform any ceremony at all.

The officer seized the arm of the girl, and pulled her to her feet.

"Go ahead with the ceremony, Morris!" he ordered.

The girl uttered a sudden, shrill scream.

"Help!" she cried; "help! murder!"

Curses escaped the lips of Marlow, while the hunter-trapper rascal looked up with an uneasy expression of countenance, and said something.



Dick did not wait for anything more, however.

Rushing to the door he first tried to open it, but found it fastened.

Then he leaped against it with all his might.

The door creaked, but withstood the onslaught.

"Come on, boys!" cried Dick, in a loud voice; "surround the house!"

Again Dick threw himself against the door, but it was too strong, and did not give way.

"They're going out through the other doorway, Dick!" cried Bob, who had remained at the window.

Then the youths raced around the cabin, and came around the corner just as the three men emerged from the doorway.

"Shoot them! Kill the scoundrels!" cried Dick, and he and Bob both fired at the same instant.

A yell of pain went up from one of the fleeing men, though which one the youths could not tell, as they all three kept on running.

"After them!" roared Dick; "don't let the scoundrels escape!" and again he and Bob fired.

The three frightened men had disappeared in the darkness of the forest now, and the youths returned to the cabin.

"They won't stop running very soon!" said Bob. "They think there are a lot of us."

They entered the cabin, and as the eyes of the girl fell upon Dick's face, she uttered a cry of delight.

"Dick," she cried; "oh, I am so glad you came in time to save me!"

"And so am I, Esther!" cried Dick.

Then he quickly cut the rope binding the girl's hands together behind her back.

"What does it mean, Esther?" Dick asked; "how did those scoundrels manage to get hold of you and bring you here?"

"It was the work of that awful man, Stanley Marlow," was the reply; "I'll tell you all about it presently."

Then Dick introduced Bob.

"Now," he said, "we had better be going. Those fellows may return at any moment, and we don't want to let them find us here."

"That's right," agreed Bob.

Then the three hastened out of the cabin, and to where the youths had left their horses.

"We have but two horses, so you will have to ride up in front of me, I guess, Esther," said Dick, and then he mounted Major, and reaching down, lifted the girl to a place in front of him.

"Major is strong, and can carry both of us easily," said Dick.

Bob was ready by this time, and they set out down the road.

They went slowly, and listened intently, for they thought that they might hear the three men who had fled so swiftly.

They heard nothing, however, and presently decided that they were to hear nothing from them at all.

But they were to hear from them before the night was ended.

"Now, Esther," said Dick, presently; "tell us all about it. How came you to be in the hands of those scoundrels?"

"It is very simple, Dick," Esther said; "when father and I went back to our home, the morning after you left us, you know, we found our house in ashes."

"I know that, Esther; I went past there on my way to Fort Washington, and it had been burned then."

"Yes. Well, we were out of a home, for the time being, so we decided to come up to the home of my uncle, father's brother, who lives only about three miles from here, and stay there till our house was rebuilt!"

"I see," said Dick.

"I have been there ever since, and only a few days after I had taken up my abode there, this British officer, Stanley Marlow—he was one of those three officers who came to our house that evening, Dick, and ate supper with you—found me, and he began pestering me with attentions at once. He said he had loved me from the moment he set eyes on me at the house that evening, and he wanted to marry me.

I did not like him at all, but rather disliked him, and told him so, and forbade him coming to see me, but he persisted and finally uncle ordered him off the place. He went, muttering threats, and we heard no more from him until this evening, when, as I was walking along the road, he and his companion leaped out and made me a prisoner, after which they took me to that cabin. They seemed to know the owner of the cabin, for although I appealed to him to aid me, he paid no attention."

"He was a confederate, no doubt," said Dick.

"I suppose so; and, oh, Dick! I am so glad you came and saved me!"

There was a tremor in the girl's voice which showed how deeply she felt.

"And you don't know how glad I am that Bob and I happened along just in time to be of service to you, Esther!" said Dick. "I owe you and your father a large debt even yet; but for me you would have a home and be living there peacefully and quietly."

"Oh, you owe us nothing, Dick!" the girl protested; "he



"we who owe you a debt of gratitude for what you have done for me!"

They talked as they rode along, and they had gone perhaps a mile and a half, when Dick suddenly said to Bob:

"Stop your horse, Bob!"

Bob obeyed, and Dick brought Major to a stop at the same instant.

"Listen!" said Dick, in a low, cautious tone.

All three listened intently, but could hear nothing.

"Strange!" said Dick; "I was sure I heard the sound of hoofbeats behind us."

"Oh, do you think those terrible men have followed us, Dick?" the girl asked.

"It is quite likely that they have done so, Esther."

"I hardly think so, Dick," said Bob; "they were too badly frightened. I'll wager they are running yet!"

"I don't know about that, Bob," soberly. "They may have discovered that there were only two of us, in which case they would not be afraid to follow us."

"Let us hurry on!" said Esther, nervously.

"I don't think there is any danger that they will attack us," said Dick; "they are probably following in order to see who we are, and whether we are likely to continue on, in which event they may try to get ahead of and waylay us."

"You must not continue on to-night, Dick!" said Esther; "you must stay over night at uncle's."

"No, we can't do that, Esther," Dick replied; "we are the bearers of dispatches from General Lee to General Washington, and must hasten on."

"I am afraid you will be waylaid and murdered!" the girl said, with a shudder.

"I don't think there is much danger, Esther."

They rode onward, and two or three times Dick thought he heard hoofbeats behind them, but when they paused and listened they could hear nothing.

A short time afterward they arrived at the home of Esther's uncle.

The house was in an uproar.

Esther's uncle had become anxious when his niece failed to come home at a reasonable hour, and he had walked over to the neighbor's to see what was keeping her.

He learned that the girl had left there two hours before to go home, and Mr. Morton knew at once that something had happened.

He was just getting ready to go in search of his niece, when she arrived in company with Dick and Bob.

He was surprised and angry when he heard the story of the abduction of the girl, and he threatened that if ever the British officer showed his face about the place again, he would shoot the scoundrel dead.

"And serve him right!" said Dick.

Bob nodded vigorous assent.

Mr. Morton could not thank the youths enough for what they had done, but they told him not to try to thank them, that they were glad to have been of service to Esther, and the means of defeating the redcoats' plans.

Besides, I am still in debt to Esther and her father," said Dick; "their house would not have been burned down but for me."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE FIGHT AT THE HOUSE.

The youths were on the point of starting ahead on their journey, when the sound of horses' hoofbeats on the ground was heard.

The horses were coming from the south, the direction in which Dick and Bob were about to start.

"They are British troopers, I will wager anything!" cried Mr. Morton.

"Then we must hasten away from here, Bob!" said Dick.

"You must do nothing of the kind!" said Mr. Morton. "Enter the house, as quickly as possible! I will put your horses where they won't be found, and will join you in a few minutes."

The youths hesitated, but the gentleman pushed them toward the doorway, and Esther cried out for them to "come in," so they did so, Mr. Morton disappearing around the corner of the house, leading the horses.

Dick closed and barred the door.

"That is good and strong," he remarked to Bob; "the redcoats would have hard work breaking through there."

"So they would," agreed Bob.

"They've stopped!" said Esther, turning pale.

Sure enough, the hoofbeats, which had been plainly audible till they came even with the house, had ceased.

Presently the sound of footsteps was heard.

"They are approaching the house!" whispered Esther.

The poor girl was trembling.

She had just passed through one nerve-trying ordeal, as a prisoner in the hands of the scoundrel Stanley Marlow, and now she was in no condition to be further tried in this respect.

Just then there came a rapping on the door.

Dick looked around.

Mrs. Morton was standing near.



She, too, was badly frightened, as well as Esther.

Dick stepped to her side.

"When they rap again, you answer," he said in a whisper. "I'll tell you what to say."

Mrs. Morton nodded, and approached nearer the door.

Again there came the rapping on the door.

It was louder and more vigorous this time.

The person doing the rapping was becoming impatient.

"Tell him to state what is wanted," whispered Dick.

"What is wanted?" called out Mrs. Morton.

"We want the door opened!" came back in a loud, imperious tone.

"Who are you?" asked the lady, having been prompted by Dick.

"I am Stanley Marlow, captain in the king's guards!" came the reply. "Open, in the king's name!"

"What do you want?"

"We want those two rebel spies who are in there!"

Dick gave Bob and Esther a significant look when the man outside said he was Stanley Marlow.

"I thought I recognized his voice," he whispered to Esther.

The poor girl was worse frightened than ever.

"He will shoot or hang you if he gets his hands on you!" she whispered.

"There are no rebel spies in here!" called out Mrs. Morton, on her own responsibility.

Dick had been on the point of answering Marlow himself, and bidding him defiance, but decided to wait awhile, and see what happened, first.

"I am sorry to have to dispute the word of a lady," came the reply; "but those two spies were here ten minutes ago, when we passed going south, and we did not meet them as we rode back. They must be in there!"

"They are not here!" the lady replied in as firm a voice as she could muster.

"We decline to take even a lady's word for anything these times, Mrs. Morton! Open, and let us see for ourselves!"

"There must be a gang of them out there, Dick," whispered Bob.

"Yes; Marlow and his companion have run onto some troopers, and have decided to try to capture us."

"I wonder if we could see out of the window?"

"I don't know. We can try it."

They made their way to the window and looked out.

The moon was now up high enough so that it was quite light outside.

They could see the redcoats.

They counted seven, and then there was Marlow at the door, which would make eight.

"We can make it lively for eight redcoats, Dick!" said Bob.

"Yes; I think we can make it interesting for them!"

Mr. Morton had entered as the redcoat officer's last words were spoken, and he whispered to his wife to tell them that the door would not be opened.

"We will not open the door!" called out Mrs. Morton.

An exclamation of rage, accompanied by what sounded like an oath, was heard, and then Marlow cried:

"Open the door, or we will batter it down!"

"You had better not try it!" cried the lady.

The officer's voice was heard addressing the soldiers, and the next moment the sound of battering upon the door was heard.

The soldiers were pounding against the door with the butts of their muskets.

"Stop that!" called Mrs. Morton; "stop pounding on that door!"

The answer was renewed energy on the part of the men pounding on the door.

"They will soon break it down if they keep on at that rate!" said Mrs. Morton, a frightened expression upon her face.

"Let's put a stop to that, Bob!" said Dick.

"All right, Dick!"

The youths each drew a pistol, which they held in their right hand.

Each took hold of the bottom portion of the window with their left hand.

"When I say 'now,' " whispered Dick, "lift the window!"

"All right," Bob replied.

As the Britons were making desperate efforts to batter down the door, the window was suddenly raised and they were confronted by two drawn pistols held in the hands of two determined "Liberty Boys."

"Stop pounding on that door, and leave this place at once," cried Dick, his voice ringing out menacingly; "or we will fire upon you!"

"We are dead shots, and will shoot to kill!" supplemented Bob.

The men stopped pounding on the door, and obeying the low-voiced order from Stanley Marlow, they reversed their muskets and fired at the youths in the window.

Dick and Bob had seen the movement in time, however, and dropped their heads below the level of the windows just before the shots were fired. The result was that the bullets whistled above their heads.



"Now, up and give it to them!" cried Dick.

They leaped up, stuck the pistols out through the open window, and, taking aim, fired.

Two of the redcoats sank to the ground with cries of pain.

The youths drew two more pistols, and again they fired, bringing down two more of the redcoats.

Marlow had managed to draw a pistol, and he fired at the youths, but missed.

"Now out and at them, Bob!" cried Dick, whose blood was up; "let's finish the gang!"

With the words Dick leaped bodily and boldly through the window, and rushed upon the redcoats, knife in hand.

Bob was right behind him, and the sudden attack of the youths, following on the fall of four of their number, demoralized the redcoats.

They turned and fled.

Dick could have stuck Marlow in the back with the knife, had he desired, but he was not the youth to do such a thing.

The redcoat was a villain of the deepest dye, but the youth did not feel that it would be right to kill him without giving him a chance for his life.

Dick was close enough to do something else, however, and he could not resist the temptation:

He gave the fleeing redcoat a vigorous kick, which extracted a yell of pain from him, and caused him to accelerate his speed.

"Take that! and stay away from here in future!" cried Dick.

The redcoats leaped upon their horses, and rode away down the road at a great rate.

The youths returned to the house and looked at the four fallen redcoats.

Three were dead, and the fourth was seriously wounded.

Dick announced this to Mr. Morton, and asked him what should be done with the wounded man.

"I guess we had better take him indoors, and do what we can for him," was the reply; "common humanity demands that much."

"Very well," said Dick, "we will carry him in. Then while you and the women folks are attending to the poor fellow's wounds, Bob and I will bury these three."

Dick, Bob and Mr. Morton carried the wounded Briton into the house, and to a spare room, and placed him on a bed.

Then, leaving Mr. Morton and his wife and Esther to do what they could for the wounded man, the youths went out doors.

Dick went to the smoke-house and got a pick and spade, and then he and Bob carried the dead men over into the edge of the timber, and, after digging a shallow grave, laid

the three in it, side by side, and covered them over. Then they returned to the house, put the pick and spade away, and re-entered the house.

They made their way to the spare room, and took a look at the wounded man.

"Do you think he will die?" asked Esther, as the youths turned away.

"Not necessarily," replied Dick; "but he will require careful nursing."

"What a dreadful thing is war!" said Mrs. Morton with a shudder.

"Yes, it is dreadful," coincided Dick; "but we are not to blame. If King George would keep his troops on the other side of the ocean, and let us alone, there would be no war. He is to blame."

"True," acknowledged Mrs. Morton. "Well, I hope he will see the error of his ways, and withdraw his troops before long."

"I fear there is not much reason to expect that he will do so," said Dick. "He is very stubborn."

There was one thing that was bothering Dick.

An encounter had taken place at the house of Mr. Morton.

Three of the redcoats had been killed and one seriously wounded, and Dick was afraid this would result in trouble for Mr. Morton.

The youth was afraid the redcoats would return and burn the house, murder Mr. Morton and perhaps his wife, and carry Esther away.

He communicated his fears to Mr. Morton privately, as he did not wish to alarm the ladies.

"I don't think there is much danger," said the gentleman, who was a brave man; "they have been given a severe lesson to-night, and I think they will fight shy of this house in future."

"I hope so," said Dick; "I was the cause of your brother's house being burned down, and now if I should be the cause of yours being burned, I should feel very badly about it."

"You would not be to blame, Mr. Slater," said the gentleman; "you rescued Esther from the hands of those scoundrels, and could not do otherwise than come here with her. Before you could get away, the redcoats came, and you simply defended yourselves. You are not to blame."

"I am glad you look at it in that light," said Dick. "It makes me feel better."

"There is no other way to look at it," was the reply.

"Well, you must be very careful, and keep your eyes open," Dick cautioned. "Don't let them take you by surprise, and if they attack you, kill as many of them as you can!"



"I will do so."

"We must be going now," said Dick; "if you will tell us where to find our horses, we will get them."

"I will bring them around to the front of the house," was the reply.

"Thank you," said Dick; then he and Bob proceeded to say good-by to Mrs. Morton and Esther.

"When will you be back in this part of the country, Dick?" asked Esther.

There was a wistful look in the girl's eyes and a barely perceptible tremor in her voice as she asked the question.

"I don't know, Esther," replied Dick, gently. "I may be back this way soon, and I might not be back again for weeks, or even months. I hope to not be away so long, however."

"If you should be passing anywhere near, you must stop, Dick!" the girl said, earnestly.

"I certainly will do so, Esther," the youth replied.

Mr. Morton had brought the horses around now, and the youths went out and mounted.

With a few more words of caution to Mr. Morton, Dick and Bob rode away down the moonlit road.

When they came to a bend which would hide them from the view of those watching, the youths turned in their saddles and waved their hats. Mr. and Mrs. Morton and Esther waved in return, and then the youths put spurs to their horses and rode rapidly onward.

"Dick," said Bob, abruptly; "that girl is in love with you!"

"Do you think so, Bob?" asked Dick.

"Yes; but how could she help being?"

"I hope you are wrong, Bob," said Dick, soberly; "I love only your sister Alice, and I would be grieved if I thought I was to be the means of causing a sweet girl like Esther unhappiness."

"Maybe she will get over it if she doesn't see you often, Dick."

"Perhaps so, Bob. I think I had better stay away from where she is."

"Maybe she will see some one else, and fall in love with him, Dick."

"I wish that she might, Bob!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### "CATCH AND HANG US IF YOU CAN!"

The youths rode for a few minutes in silence, and then Bob said:

"Do you suppose there is any danger of those fellows waylaying us, Dick, and firing on us as we pass along?"

"I was thinking of that, Bob. I hardly think there any danger, though. They were too badly frightened."

At this instant they heard a sharp voice cry: "Fire!"

The youths dropped forward upon the necks of the horses, just as the crack! crack! of several muskets was heard.

This action saved their lives, as the bullets whistled above them at the spot their bodies had occupied a moment before.

Instantly the youths straightened up, turned their horse heads and plunged forward toward the underbrush from which the shots had come.

At the same instant they drew their pistols.

They plunged into the underbrush and were just in time to see several redcoats running as if for their lives.

The youths fired quickly, but, as they did not take aim it was doubtful if they hit either of the fleeing men.

The youths did not pursue the redcoats.

They had other business to attend to.

"That was Marlow and his three companions," said Dick.

"Yes; he thought he would get even with us for what we did to his gang back at Mr. Morton's."

"He came very near doing it, too, Bob. That was a close call."

"That's right; if we hadn't dropped forward on the horses' necks, we would have been killed, sure!"

The youths rode onward at a good pace.

Half an hour later they arrived at Dick's home.

The house was dark and silent.

"I guess they have gone to bed," said Dick; "well, won't disturb them."

They rode onward, and when they came opposite Bob's home, they saw the house was lighted.

"Maybe your folks are over here, Dick," said Bob.

"Maybe so, Bob. We'll stop and see, anyway."

They did so, and found that this was the case.

Mrs. Slater and Edith had come over to spend the evening.

They were just getting ready to return to their own home when the youths put in an appearance, and they postponed starting till the youths should take their departure.

Dick and Bob related the story of their adventures since leaving there in the afternoon, and then half an hour was spent in conversation.

At the end of that time the youths said they must continue on their way, and bidding all good night, Dick and



Bob made their way out to the road, Alice and Edith accompanying them.

The youths gave the girls a hug and some kisses, and then, mounting their horses, rode away.

The youths were soon at Tarrytown, but did not tarry there.

They rode straight on through.

At the same time they kept a sharp lookout for redcoats and Tories. They knew there were many of the latter in the village, and thought there might be some of the former.

This proved to be the case.

They had almost reached the further side of the village, and were congratulating themselves on not having encountered any enemies, when they met a company of British troopers, who were just entering the village.

Instantly the youths whirled their horses and darted down a side street.

The redcoats saw them, and set up a yell.

"After them!" cried the commander of the company, in a loud voice; "they are rebels! Catch them, and then we'll have a hanging bee!"

"Catch and hang us if you can!" cried Dick, defiantly.

"You can't do it!" cried Bob.

The youths had great confidence in their horses.

Major was a magnificent animal, very speedy, and Bob's horse was not so very far behind him in speed and endurance.

The youths did not believe the redcoats' horses could keep up with theirs.

"Lean forward; they are going to fire!" cried Dick.

The youths dropped forward on the necks of the horses.

The next instant there came the crash of firearms.

The bullets whistled about the fugitives, but none took effect.

Dick and Bob uttered a shout of defiance.

"You couldn't hit us in a hundred years!" cried Dick.

The British troopers lashed their horses unmercifully.

They were angered by the taunts of the youths, and wished to catch them.

"We must make a half circuit, and manage to get back onto the road again," said Dick. "We musn't let them run in a direction that will be out of our way."

"That's so," agreed Bob.

The first street they came to that turned in the direction they wished to go, Dick headed into it, Bob keeping close alongside him.

Presently they made another turn to the left, and after going in this direction for a short distance they came to the main road leading southward. Striking into this, they rode on in the direction they wished to go, well satisfied.

They were going toward their destination, and they did not care if the redcoats did urge them on to greater speed than they would ordinarily have traveled. The redcoats kept up the chase with commendable perseverance and determination, but they were gradually falling behind.

Their horses were not so speedy as those on which Dick and Bob were mounted.

"A good horse is a mighty good thing, Bob!" said Dick.

"You are right, old man; our horses are getting us out of this difficulty in fine shape."

"A fellow engaged in our business wouldn't be safe for a minute if mounted on a slowpoke of a horse," said Dick.

"You are right about that!"

The fugitives gradually drew away from their pursuers, and presently could neither see nor hear them.

They did not immediately slacken their speed, however, as they were confident the redcoats would keep up the chase for awhile longer.

They did not feel a bit worried.

They felt that they were safe.

They rode at least a mile further at full speed before slowing down.

Then, being sure that the redcoats were so far behind they would not be able to pull up with them, Dick and Bob brought their horses down to a moderate gallop.

"What are so many gangs of redcoats doing, chasing around up here in the country?" asked Bob.

"They are foraging, Bob. They are stealing food and valuables of all kinds wherever they can lay hands on them."

"Of course, they pick out patriots to rob, where it is possible to do so."

"Oh, yes; they do that."

Half an hour later, they entered the village of Dobb's Ferry.

They rode down toward the ferry landing.

They proceeded cautiously.

They remembered their experience on the flat-boat the day before.

"What are you going to do if that gang of redcoats are on guard, Dick?" asked Bob.

"Try to scare them out, old man. We must get across the river, redcoats or no redcoats."

"I'm with you!" said Bob, grimly.

The youths reached the landing without having seen anything of the redcoats.

The boat was there, but there was nobody on board it.

The youths knew where the ferryman lived.

His house was about fifty yards away, up the slope.

Dick went up and roused the ferryman.



He came down, and the youths led their horses on the boat.

Five minutes later they were moving away from the shore.

They were about fifty yards out when the band of redcoats that had been chasing them, and which they had almost forgotten about, came riding furiously down to the landing.

The commander shouted furiously for the ferryman to return.

The ferryman was a patriot, but he did not wish the redcoats to know it.

He was badly frightened.

"What shall I do, gentlemen?" he asked; "if I refuse to return they will brand me as a rebel, and there is no telling what they may do to me!"

"I'll fix that," said Dick.

Then he drew his pistol, and, pointing it at the head of the ferryman, cried, in a voice loud enough for the redcoats to hear:

"Attempt to return, ferryman, and you are a dead man! Go straight ahead!"

"When you go back you can tell them that you were forced to take us across, at the point of the pistol," said Dick, quietly. "They will not harm you then."

"I guess they won't," was the dubious reply.

It took nearly half an hour to cross the river, and when the other side was reached they went ashore, paid the ferryman, and mounting, rode onward, feeling well satisfied.

"I guess we are safe now, Dick," said Bob; "I don't suppose there are any redcoats on this side of the river."

"Perhaps not, Bob; it is not certain, however."

The youths rode onward at a good pace.

Their experience seemed to bear out Bob's idea regarding there being no redcoats on the west side of the river, for they saw none.

It was about three o'clock in the morning when they arrived at Fort Lee.

They had talked the matter over, and decided that they would report to General Washington as soon as they reached headquarters.

Knowing the contents of the letter they bore from General Lee would be a surprise and disappointment to the commander-in-chief, they figured it that he would wish to know about it at the earliest possible moment.

So as soon as they had attended to their horses and made them comfortable, the youths made their way to the farmhouse in which Generals Washington and Greene were sleeping.

The youths roused an orderly, and told him to let Gen-

eral Washington know they had returned from North Castle.

The youths entered and sat down in the room where the orderly spent most of his time, to await the summons from the commander-in-chief.

Fifteen minutes later the orderly returned and told them to follow him.

He led the way to the room occupied by the commander-in-chief.

General Washington was up and dressed.

He greeted the youths pleasantly, and looked at them eagerly.

"You made the trip in safety, then!" he said. "I am glad of that!"

"Yes, we made it in safety, your excellency," said Dick.

Then he handed the commander-in-chief the letter from General Lee.

Washington opened the letter and read it.

The youths, knowing the contents of the letter, watched the face of the commander-in-chief with interest.

At first the expression on the general's face was one of expectation. Soon, however, the expression changed to one of surprise, and then presently to indignation. The square, iron-like jaws of the commander-in-chief became more stern-set than ever.

When he had finished reading, General Washington sat motionless for a minute at least, looking down at the floor.

Presently he looked up.

"Orderly!" he called.

The orderly entered a few moments later.

"Awaken General Greene, and send him here as soon as he has dressed," was the order.

The orderly saluted and withdrew.

The commander-in-chief looked at the youths.

"You know what this letter contains?" he asked.

"We have a pretty good idea, your excellency," said Dick, quietly.

"Did General Lee say anything special to you, or in your hearing?" he asked.

"No; nothing special. He said he was not going to bring the troops over, was about all."

"He told you that?"

"Yes, sir."

"And he did not state his reasons?"

"No, sir."

Fifteen minutes later the door opened, and General Greene entered.

He looked at the commander-in-chief inquiringly, after greeting the youths.



"What is it, general?" he asked.

"General Lee refuses to send the troops!"

General Greene started.

"What!" he exclaimed, a look of blank amazement appearing on his face.

"Read for yourself!" and the commander-in-chief handed him the letter.

General Greene read the letter, a look of indignation appearing on his face as he did so.

"Why, this is almost beyond belief!" he exclaimed; "what does the man mean?"

"It looks as if he means to let us shift for ourselves," replied General Washington.

"But you are not going to permit him to have his way?"

"Not if I can help it!" said Washington; "I shall send messenger to him to-morrow with peremptory orders to bring his portion of the army across the river and join us immediately!"

"And I'll take the order!" cried Dick, promptly.

## CHAPTER IX.

### BACK TO NORTH CASTLE.

The commander-in-chief looked at Dick approvingly.

"I should be glad to have you do so," he said; "but won't you be too much fatigued to attempt the trip? You have just returned from there, and have surely had but little rest."

"We can get four hours' sleep, and then leave here at half-past eight," said Dick. "That will be early enough to start, will it not?"

"Oh, yes; well, you had better go to bed at once, so as to get all the sleep possible."

The youths saluted and withdrew, going to the quarters occupied by the company of "Liberty Boys."

Next morning, after breakfast, they presented themselves before the commander-in-chief, and announced themselves being ready to start on the trip to North Castle.

The commander-in-chief looked as if he had spent a sleepless night.

It was evident that he was greatly worried.

"Ah! you are on hand, I see," he remarked; "well, do you feel as if you could get through, and carry this document to General Lee?" and he held up a folded paper.

"Indeed, yes, your excellency," said Dick, promptly; "if there is an order to General Lee to bring the troops across the

river, I would place it in his hands if I had to fight every inch of the way through redcoats and Tories!"

"Good! Well, take the order, and deliver it to General Lee as soon as possible. It is imperative that the army under his command join my army here at once."

"We won't let any grass grow under the feet of our horses, your excellency."

Dick placed the order carefully in his pocket, and then he and Bob saluted and withdrew.

The youths had already saddled and bridled their horses, so all they had to do was to mount and ride away.

This they did without any loss of time, and ten minutes after leaving the presence of the commander-in-chief they were out of the fort, and riding away toward the north.

"Will we take the same route we traveled yesterday, Dick?" asked Bob.

"Yes; we are familiar with it, Bob; and it is as good as any we could take, anyway."

"So it is, I guess."

The youths made very good time, and when they reached the ferry-landing opposite Dobb's Ferry, and rode onto the ferryboat in the coolest, most offhand manner imaginable the ferryman was very much astonished, as were also the half-dozen British soldiers who were there. It happened that they were the same fellows who were on the boat the day before, and they looked as if they did not know what to make of the bold youths.

The youths had their eyes on the redcoats, and as soon as they had dismounted, Dick and Bob drew their pistols and advanced to within a few feet of where the redcoats stood.

"If you fellows behave yourselves, all will be well," said Dick, coldly and quietly; "but," he went on, menacingly, "if you try any tricks, there will be trouble!"

The redcoats, although outnumbering the youths three to one, were awed by the audacity of the two, as well as by the knowledge of who they were. The youths' reputation for being dangerous was well known, and the redcoats felt that they were as good as dead men if they tried to attack the two.

Dick and Bob stood there, pistol in hand, and the redcoats made no move toward trying to capture them; then when the other side was reached, the two led their horses off the boat, mounted and rode away as coolly as if there was not a foe within a hundred miles.

"Well, that beats anything I ever saw for nerve!" said the ferryman to himself, a feeling of admiration taking possession of him; "those two boys are the coolest and bravest fellows I ever saw in all my life!"

"Why didn't you try to capture them?" he asked the redcoats, as the youths rode away.



"We did not have a strong enough force," was the reply.

"Why, you were six to two!"

"I know; but those two are fiends to fight—regular devils!"

"Oh, that's it, eh?"

"Yes; they are equal to a dozen common men."

"Who are they?" asked the ferryman, pretending that he did not know.

"Their names are Dick Slater and Bob Estabrook, and they are the two best spies in the rebel army."

"Oh, that's who they are? I've heard of them."

"Of course you have—everybody has. So you know it would not do for six to try to capture the two, when they had pistols drawn."

"That's so."

"Say, Dick, those fellows on the boat were afraid of us, weren't they!" laughed Bob, as the youths rode up the road.

"It looked that way, Bob," with a smile.

"Yes, they were pretty badly scared."

"I guess you are right, Bob; else they would certainly have attacked us, and tried to capture us."

"We must be making quite a name for ourselves, Dick!"

"Yes; but I hope we will be able to make a much greater name for ourselves before the war is ended."

"We'll keep right on trying, Dick."

"So we will."

The youths rode onward, and reached Tarrytown at about noon.

They did not stop there, but hastened onward.

They were in a hurry to reach their homes, as they intended taking dinner with their folks again to-day, as they had done the day before.

"They'll be surprised to see us again so soon, Dick," said Bob.

"So they will, Bob. It will be a pleasant surprise, though."

"So it will."

Half an hour later they arrived at the gate in front of Bob's home, and, as they anticipated, the folks were surprised to see them.

Dick hastened on to his home, and was greeted with delighted surprise by his mother and sister.

He explained matters to them, as Bob was explaining matters to his folks at home, and, as was their usual custom, the youths changed places after dinner, Dick going over to Mr. Estabrook's and Bob coming over to Dick's home.

The half hour they spent with their sweethearts was a very enjoyable one, but they would not wait longer than

that, as they were on important business for the commander-in-chief. They would not have waited that long, only for letting the horses have time to eat.

Then they mounted and rode away again, first promising to stop on the way back, if they came that way.

As may be supposed, Alice and Edith were glad the boys had come again so soon. If it had been left to them, doubtless they would have had Dick and Bob given the task of riding backward and forward between Fort Lee and North Castle all the time.

The youths rode onward, and not meeting with any adventures that delayed them, reached North Castle at about half-past three o'clock.

They reported to General Lee at once.

"What! are you back again?" exclaimed General Lee, when he saw who the messengers were.

"Yes, we are back again," said Dick, coldly.

He did not like the man, so was coldly polite, and that was all.

Dick handed General Lee the order which he had brought from the commander-in-chief, and the general took it and opened it with nervous fingers.

It was plain to the youths that the man was uneasy regarding the contents of the communication.

He read the letter, and then rose and paced backward and forward across the floor.

He gazed down at the floor, and seemed to be thinking deeply.

At last he raised his eyes, and they fell upon Dick and Bob.

"You may retire," he said. "Remain in camp till I send for you."

"I suppose we may as well remain and go with the army?" said Dick.

"Do what you are ordered to do, and ask no questions!" was the angry reply.

The youths left the room without taking the trouble to salute, and when they were outside Bob grinned in a comical manner.

"Say, the general was mad, wasn't he!" he said.

"He did seem a bit angry," smiled Dick. "Well, I don't care. I don't like him, Bob!"

"Neither do I; and if the truth was known, I'll bet that the commander-in-chief doesn't like him any too well!"

"He's a scheming rascal, if he is a general, Bob!" said Dick, decidedly.

"I guess you are right, old man."

The youths made themselves at home.

They knew lots of the soldiers, and being well-liked, were not likely to feel lonesome or out of place.



Then, too, the youths had been in battle two days before, when the British captured Fort Washington, and the soldiers wished to hear all about it.

The truth of the matter was that the troops were getting restless.

They would much rather have been somewhere where they would be in action than to be sitting quietly here at North Castle, twenty miles away from the British.

"I don't see why the general don't take us over across the river, where we can join Washington's army," said one; "then the commander-in-chief could do something. With the army split in this fashion he can do nothing. We are of no benefit to him whatever."

"To speak plainly," said Dick, "I don't think General Lee wants you to be of benefit to the commander-in-chief!"

"You think not?"

The soldiers looked surprised.

"That is just what I think! The fact of the matter is that General Lee is second in command of the Continental army, and if anything should happen to General Washington, he would be made commander-in-chief."

The soldiers opened their eyes and stared in amazement.

"Ah, ha!" said one; "I see the point!"

"You'd better be careful how you talk, Dick," said another; "if the general should learn of it, he would have you arrested."

"I am not afraid of it getting to his ears," said Dick; "you fellows won't take it to him. Still, I wouldn't care very much if it did get to him, for it is the truth, I am confident, and it might do him some good, and waken him up a bit if he knew his schemes were suspected."

"It looks very strange, his not moving to join the commander-in-chief," said a soldier. "We are certainly needed here."

"Indeed you are," agreed Dick; "and I brought a positive and peremptory order from the commander-in-chief yesterday, and another one to-day, for General Lee to bring the troops across the river, and you see how he has obeyed."

"We ought to be getting ready to move at this very moment," said another.

"So we ought," from still another.

"And I will wager anything," said Dick, "that you do not receive an order to move at all!"

Dick and Bob had no thought other than that they would be summoned to General Lee's headquarters in the course of an hour or so, and be sent back to the commander-in-chief with a message of some kind, but the afternoon passed away, evening came, and still they were not sent for.

They ate supper with the soldiers, and waited patiently for the order to come for them to report to General Lee, but they waited in vain.

They stayed up till ten o'clock, and then, being sleepy and feeling sure that they would not be sent for that night, they wrapped themselves in blankets furnished by their friends, and, lying down in the soldiers' quarters, went to sleep.

They ate breakfast with the soldiers next morning, and confidently expected to be sent for at an early hour; but again they were disappointed. Noon came, and still they had received no orders from General Lee to appear before him.

"What does he mean, anyway?" said Dick; "I don't understand it at all. He is neither obeying orders to move his army across the river, nor is he in the least hurry to even answer the commander-in-chief's communication."

"He is acting very strangely, it seems to me," said Bob.

"He certainly is, Bob!"

They ate dinner, and waited as patiently as they could.

Both were getting fidgety, however.

"I'll tell you what, Bob," said Dick, "if he doesn't send for us before supper, just as soon as we have eaten, we will mount our horses and start back, anyway!"

"But we would be disobeying orders, Dick; he told us to wait till he sent for us."

"I don't care; we are not under him. He has no right to make us stay here. Our company of 'Liberty Boys' is with the army under the commander-in-chief at Hackensack, and we have the right to return to our company, and I shall do it!"

No summons came before supper time, but while they were eating an orderly came and told them that General Lee wished them to report to him at once.

"Tell him we'll be there as soon as we get through eating supper," replied Dick, coolly, and the orderly, his eyes sticking out in astonishment, bowed and retired.

"He has made us wait more than twenty-four hours, he can wait a few minutes," said Dick, quietly, and the soldiers applauded him heartily.

When they had finished eating, the youths made their way to General Lee's headquarters.

Dick expected to receive a reprimand for keeping the general waiting, and was prepared to speak plainly at being detained for twenty-four hours, but General Lee had not a word of reproof to utter.

"Here is a message. Take it to General Washington," was all he said, but it was said in a very curt tone.

Dick took the document and placed it in his pocket.



"It will be in the hands of the commander-in-chief before daylight to-morrow morning," said Dick, quietly.

Then without another word, the youths took their departure.

They went at once and bridled and saddled their horses.

Then they bade their friends good-by, and rode out of the camp and away toward the south.

## CHAPTER X.

### IN THE NICK OF TIME.

The youths rode along for some distance in silence.

Then Dick spoke.

"This is rather a strange affair, Bob," he said. "I don't see why General Lee held us at the camp so long, instead of sending us right back with his reply."

"Maybe he wanted time to think up excuses for not obeying orders, Dick."

"Maybe that was it."

And without knowing it, the youths had hit upon the exact facts in the case.

General Lee had been hard pushed for excuses for not obeying orders, and had not only studied all the rest of the evening and part of the night, but all next day, and had finally finished writing a letter which was made up of vague hints regarding "difficulties which made it impossible for him to move his army at just that time."

The youths rode at a good pace, and when they reached the home of Mr. Morton they saw that everything was quiet about the place, so did not stop.

Dick thought it best not to do so, on Esther's account.

He did not wish to do anything that might make the girl think he cared for her.

But when they reached their own homes they stopped.

Not for long, however; only long enough to exchange a few words with all, and steal a few kisses from Alice and Edith. Then they continued on their way.

When they reached the river they were surprised to find the ferryboat missing.

They looked at each other in blank dismay.

"This is very strange!" said Dick.

"I wonder where the boat can be?" said Bob.

"I don't know; but maybe I can find out by going up to the ferryman's house."

Dick hastened up to the house, and knocked upon the door.

Presently the door was opened by a woman, who was evidently the ferryman's wife.

"Where is the ferryboat?" asked Dick; "we wish to get across the river."

"I don't know where it is," was the reply; "save that it is somewhere down the river."

"Down the river?"

"Yes."

"How came the ferryman to take it down the river?"

"He didn't do it; nor did he wish it done. The British made him let them take it away."

"The British took it away down the river?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"They left here just after dinner."

"Have you any idea why they took the boat?"

The woman shook her head.

"I have not," she replied; "though they must want to use it down below somewhere."

"Thank you for the information you have given me," said Dick.

Then he returned to Bob, and told him what he had learned.

"What does it mean, Dick?" Bob asked.

"I'll tell you, Bob," said Dick, soberly; "I am afraid it means danger for the American army—or at least danger for Fort Lee."

"You think the redcoats are going to cross the river and move on Fort Lee?"

"I fear that is what they are up to, Bob!"

Bob was excited.

"Then we must hurry!" he said. "If we don't, we may be too late to strike a single blow at the redcoats."

"You are right; we will hurry."

"How are we going to get across the river, though, Dick?"

"We will continue on down on this side, and maybe we will find a chance to get across somewhere down below."

"We'll have to be careful not to run into the lines of the redcoats."

"Yes; we'll have to look out for that."

The youths mounted, and, riding back up onto the high ground, found the road, and rode onward toward the south at a gallop.

They were on the alert, for they did not know at what moment they might be challenged by the redcoats.

The British were so interested in something they were doing, at a point six or seven miles down the river, however, that they were giving little or no attention to the roads.



The youths were to soon learn what was going on.

An hour later they came to a point where a road left the main road, and led down toward the river, and the youths made their way down this road.

When they reached the river bank they found fifteen or twenty ferryboats there.

They soon found the Dobb's Ferry boat, and approached the owner, who recognized them at once.

"What has been going on here?" asked Dick, in a low tone.

"Sh!" cautioned the ferryman, "some of these ferrymen are loyalists. We have just finished taking five thousand British troops across the river!"

"I suspected something of the kind!" said Dick; "do you know what their intentions are?"

"From words I heard drop, I think it is their intention to attack Fort Lee."

Dick was all excitement at once, as was Bob also.

"They are going to try to surprise the garrison at the fort!" he said; "we must get there ahead of them if possible, Bob, and warn the patriots!"

"So we must!" agreed Bob.

"You must take us across immediately!" said Dick to the ferryman.

"I will do so," the ferryman said. "I will be taking considerable risk in doing so, however."

"Well, this is a time when a true patriot will not hesitate on account of danger to himself," said Dick.

"You are right; I will take you across, and risk the consequences."

The youths led their horses aboard the boat, and a few moments later it was moving out into the river.

"What are you doing there, Scanlon?" called a ferryman.

"I am taking these young gentlemen across the river," was the reply; "can't you see?"

"You had better not do it!" was the reply, in a threatening tone.

"He can't help himself," called back Dick, displaying a pistol, the barrel of which shone in the moonlight; "it is death to him if he refuses!"

There was excitement among the ferrymen at this, but they were none of them armed, and they could do nothing.

"I'm glad you did that," said Scanlon, the ferryman; "I can tell them that I could not help myself, but that I had to take you across."

"So you can," said Dick; "that is the reason I did it."

Twenty minutes later they were on the other side of the river, and, thanking the ferryman, the youths mounted their horses and rode away as fast as they could go.

"We will have to go a roundabout way," said Dick, "to keep from running onto the redcoats."

"So we will," agreed Bob. "Do you think we can get to the fort in time to give them warning?"

"We must do it, Bob!"

There was grim determination in Dick's tone.

The youths were tolerably familiar with the lay of the land, and knew the route the redcoats would take. They knew, also, the route they would have to take to get around the redcoats and reach the fort ahead of them.

As they rode away from the river they were riding west, and when they came to the first road turning south they did not turn, for they knew that this was the way the British troops had gone.

Instead they kept on another mile, till they came to another road.

They turned south down this road, and urged their horses to their best speed.

"We must get to the fort far enough in advance of the redcoats so that our men will have time to get out and away in safety," said Dick.

"You are right," agreed Bob. "Well, if we keep up this gait I guess we will make it."

Onward thundered the two splendid chargers, and mile after mile was gone over with great rapidity.

At last the youths came to the road which, turning off to the left, led to Fort Lee, and they entered the road and raced up it with undiminished speed.

Five minutes later they rode into the fort like twin thunderbolts.

They gave the alarm at once, and soon the garrison was astir.

General Greene was soon among the men, and Dick and Bob told him of the coming of the British.

"And there are five thousand, you say?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," replied Dick.

"Then it would be folly to try to engage them. We could not possibly hold the fort, and would all be captured. We must evacuate at once!"

He gave the order.

"There will be no time to take away the cannon, tents, blankets or provisions," he said; "we must fly, if we are to save ourselves!"

Ten minutes after Dick and Bob arrived at the fort the soldiers began leaving it.

There were about two thousand men, and it took some time for them all to get out and get started.

Dick and Bob and the company of "Liberty Boys" were the last to leave, and they were less than a quarter of a mile away when the British reached the deserted fort.



"They heard the triumphant yells of the British very plainly.

"I wish they would follow us," said Bob; "I'd like to take a few shots at them!"

Bob got his wish.

The British started in pursuit.

They came in sight of the retreating force, and began firing.

The company of "Liberty Boys," as well as several of the other companies who were in the rear ranks, returned the fire.

The British did not follow far.

They seemed content with having captured the fort, the cannon and the supplies.

An hour later the patriot force crossed the bridge across the Hackensack, and joined the main army, which was stationed between the Hackensack and Passaic Rivers.

The commander-in-chief was here, and when General Greene informed him of what had taken place, he said it could not be helped.

"You were lucky to escape at all, General Greene," he said.

"We should not have escaped had it not been for Dick and Bob, here," said General Greene, indicating the youths, who stood near.

The commander-in-chief's eyes lighted up as they fell upon the youths.

"Ah! you are back again!" he exclaimed; "are Lee and his army on their way here?"

"I think not, your excellency," replied Dick; "here is a communication from General Lee, which will, I judge, explain all."

The commander-in-chief took the letter.

"Come to my tent," he said, addressing General Greene. "I will read this, and see what General Lee has to say."

The two generals hastened away, and Dick and Bob made their way to the point where the "Liberty Boys" had taken up their quarters.

"Well, this is rough, isn't it?" said Bob, sadly.

"Yes, but it might be worse," said Dick. "It would have been worse if we had not discovered the plans of the British, and reached the fort in time to give General Greene warning."

"That's true, too."

"What makes me madder than anything else, Bob, is the manner in which General Lee is acting," said Dick. "We are needing the troops over here now, and needing them badly!"

"So we are, Dick."

"If the five thousand redcoats that are on this side of the river should come here and engage us in battle to-night, it would be almost an equal thing," said Dick; "now, what would happen if the entire British army, numbering between fifteen and twenty thousand troops, should come here and attack us?"

"I guess it would be all up with us, Dick!"

"It certainly would. We would not stand any chance with them at all."

The youths were still engaged in conversation when an orderly came and told them that they were wanted at the tent of the commander-in-chief.

The youths presented themselves before General Washington at once.

General Greene was still there.

Both generals looked anxious and careworn.

"When did you leave North Castle, Dick?" asked the commander-in-chief.

"At seven o'clock yesterday evening, your excellency."

It was now three o'clock in the morning of November 20.

"Why did you not return sooner?"

"General Lee ordered us to remain."

"Ah!"

The two great generals looked at each other.

"Did General Lee say anything in your hearing regarding why he did not wish to bring the troops across the river?"

"No, sir," replied Dick. "The fact is, General Lee doesn't like me, and when I remarked that I supposed we would return with the troops, he told me to obey orders and not ask any questions."

"That is just like Lee," said Greene.

"General Lee's refusal to send the troops places us in a serious predicament, General Greene," said Washington, his handsome face clouded.

"So it does, your excellency."

"Here we are with only about five thousand men, and occupying a very dangerous position," Washington went on. "Should more of the British cross the river, and join those that are now in possession of Fort Lee, they could attack us, with every chance in their favor."

"So they could," agreed Greene, his face very sober.

After asking Dick a few more questions regarding the troops under Lee at North Castle, the commander-in-chief told the youths they might withdraw, and they saluted and returned to their quarters.

The commander-in-chief sent for Dick in the morning, and asked him to go and reconnoitre the position of the British at Fort Lee.

"Find out all you can, Dick, my boy," he said; "and if



to see any sign of a movement in this direction, come and inform me of it at once."

"I will do so, your excellency," said Dick.

Dick watched the British all that day, but they seemed to be content with taking it easy in the fort which they had captured.

"It is the calm that precedes the storm, though," thought Dick; "I think they are waiting for more troops to come across the river and join them; then they will attack us."

He made his report in the evening, and then scouts were sent out to watch during the night.

It would not do to be taken by surprise.

The British remained quiet throughout that night, however, but the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental army, fearing that his army would be attacked if it remained where it was, ordered the troops to break camp next day, the 21st, and the army crossed the Passaic and marched toward Newark.

Here the troops went into camp.

Here the army remained five days, and every day the Commander-in-chief sent a messenger to North Castle, with orders to General Lee to bring his troops across the river, and join the portion under General Washington.

Dick was the first person sent, and on the next day Bob was chosen for the task; then, each day of the next three days, a man was sent.

The road between the army under Washington and North Castle, where General Lee, with seven thousand men, was making things easy, was kept hot, but it did but little good, seemingly.

The commander-in-chief and General Greene held many conferences, but as each day passed without any word from General Lee and his army, their faces grew more troubled.

"The outlook is dark, my friend," said General Washington, as he and General Greene were conversing in the tent they used jointly, the evening of the 27th of November.

"So it is," agreed Greene.

"Ah! if Lee would only come!" sighed the commander-in-chief; "then, if the enemy appeared, we could meet them on something like equal terms; as it is we would not dare meet them at all."

Next day the British appeared, and the army was forced to begin a retreat.

The patriot army retreated to New Brunswick, where, two days later, they were again confronted by the British, and Washington and his men crossed the Raritan, and, destroying the bridge, started toward Princeton.

"Ah! if Lee and his army would only come!" murmured the brave Washington, again and again.

But Lee and his army did not come—at least, not then. And fortunately—as it eventually turned out—Lee never came.

THE END.

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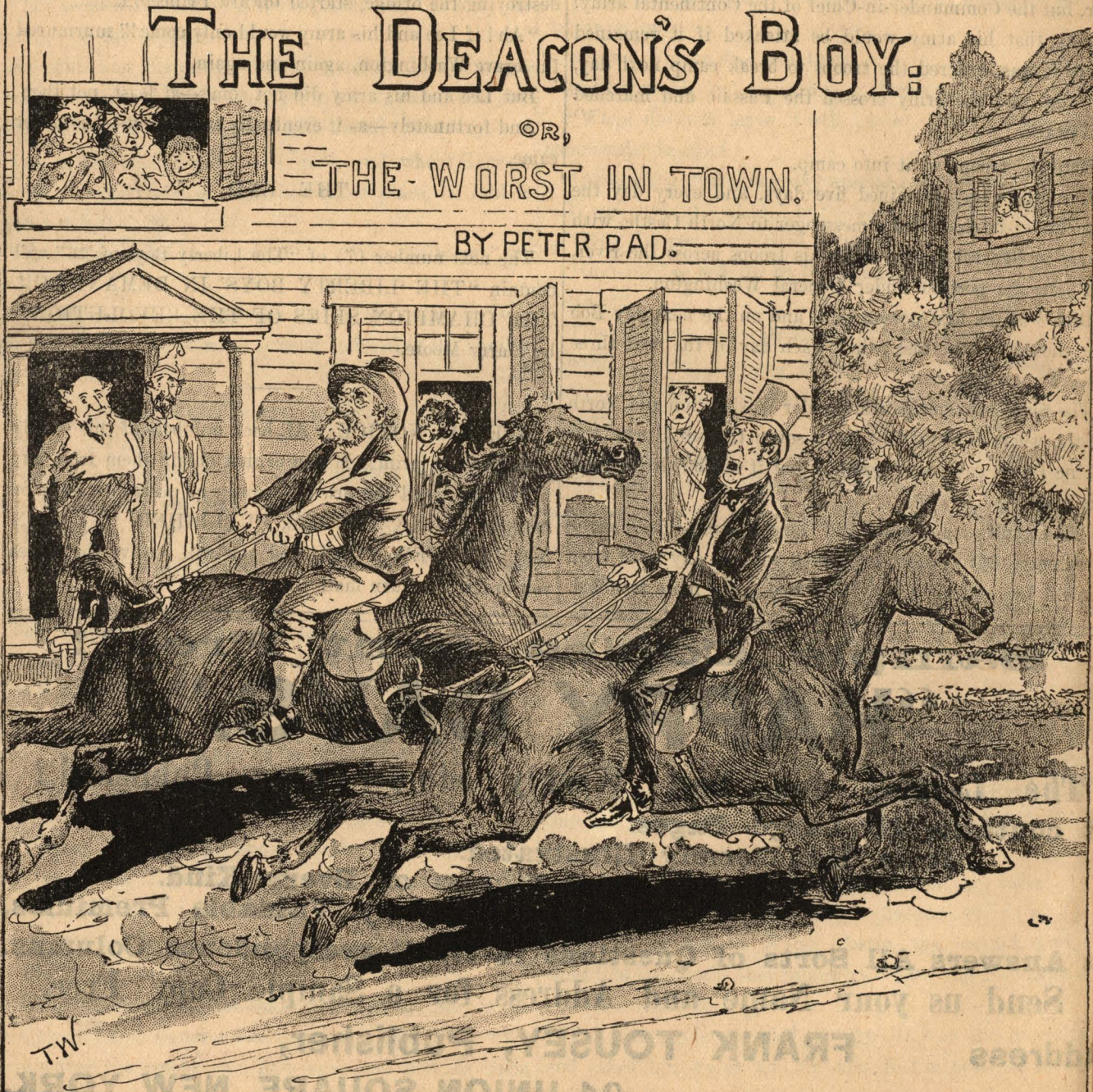
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